

كانا من الاول

## Button up, noise affects your health!

Kofie Attah

Special to The Star

**INVENTION, TECHNOLOGY,** radical changes in the world today. We turn a faucet, push a button, a receiver and things leap into action. A cellular phone can carry voice communication to Jeddah or further to Hong Kong. A satellite dish would bring your favourite TV program to your doorstep from New York. Sophisticated computer enable astronauts to link up with space platforms orbiting the earth. A drilling machine can break the hardest rock.

These things conceived by man are almost

incredible. Yet the side affects and risks they bring into being through immeasurable noises they emit cannot be ignored. Have you ever been tempted to ask that question? May be you should ask it now. Can ordinary noise affect your health?

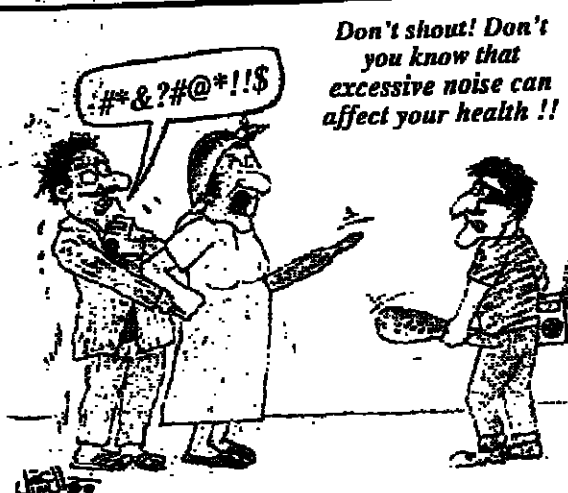
Researchers have found out that excessive noise can affect your health in several ways from inner-ear ailments to heart attack. A confirmed report indicates that manual labourers, factory workers, those with high stress job and people exposed to direct noise are more likely to contract headaches, high blood pressure and heart attack.

Jordan may be one of the countries with a high

standard of living and a good health record but may suffer in silence from noise risk. The phenomena exists in many parts of the world but people in the third world without adequate measures to soundproof their homes and offices are generally exposed to the threats of its pollution.

Dr. F.R. Haddad a Urological surgeon in Amman who made a new medical discovery said "noise can be dangerous like any other form of pollution." He assessed that music, especially hard rock, TV and anything that disturbs one's noise timing can be dangerous. He disclosed that

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### Window on Jordan

# The Star

**Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly**

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● Hussein, nouveau roi de la diplomatie

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

## Exchange deal puts Yassin in Gaza as new power broker next to Arafat

**Analysts say Hamas' political role will be greatly enhanced Netanyahu gravely weakened by bungled Mossad operation**

By a Star Staff Writer and Combined Agencies

CONCLUDING TWO weeks of cloak-and-dagger escapades, a complex deal was worked out after the Israeli Mossad bungled an assassination attempt against Hamas leader Khaled Misha'i in Amman 12 days ago. Under the deal, the two captured Mossad agents were sent home, but at a heavy price for Israel. It agreed to release Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, who later returned to Gaza from Amman, in addition to releasing up to 70 Palestinian and Jordanian prisoners. But most of all the Misha'i Affair sent a severe blow to the credibility and prestige of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Meanwhile, the tangled affair that began with the assassination attempt and led to Monday's prisoner exchange has yet to end. Analysts say the events of the last two weeks have strengthened Hamas and gravely affected relations between Israel and Jordan. It also created a political crisis for the Netanyahu government and has overshadowed the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations after a six-month rupture. This is probably why Netanyahu hastened to arrange for a meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arranged by US Special envoy Dennis Ross early Wednesday.

Netanyahu called His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday and promised to respect the peace treaty signed between the two countries.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, a quadriplegic who formed Hamas—the Islamic Resistance Movement—in 1987, marked another in a series of emotional boosts for the faction in the last week. In Jordan and in Palestine. Smiling and wearing a white scarf over his head, Sheikh Yassin was carried in his wheelchair into a crowded press conference held before he left Amman. He started with appreciation of the Jordanian kind hospitality, and then stressed the wish for a peaceful means to gain the Palestinian legitimate rights.

### King relates details of Jordan-Israel contacts to defuse Misha'i crisis

AMMAN (Star)—Addressing a public rally in Amman on Wednesday, His Majesty King Hussein has made new revelations related to the failed assassination attempt by Mossad agents against Hamas leader Khaled Misha'i two weeks ago. The King said all the contacts with concerned parties concentrated on the priority of saving the life of the Jordanian citizen, Misha'i. The King described the incident as "a slap to all of us," but he stressed that the two agents were released in exchange of the life of Misha'i, the freedom of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and over 70 Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners.

Speaking at Al-Husseini Sports City, King Hussein added that the concerned party behind the incident presented all the necessary information, without which it would have been impossible to save the life of Misha'i.

The King said Jordan insisted on understanding the details of the attack, during which Misha'i was sprayed with an unknown chemical agent. The King made it clear that while some details of the incident were made public, others have not been disclosed. But he revealed that Israel's prime minister, defence minister and minister of infrastructure had visited Amman on 29 September, five days after Misha'i was attacked. The King added that he asked His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to meet with them. The King said the Israelis apologized for what has happened in Jordan, and they said such an incident will not happen again.

The King also unveiled that the Israeli Minister of Infrastructure, Ariel Sharon, visited Amman on the night of 4 October and the result was the release of 23 Jordanian prisoners. 9 of them were returned to Jordan last week and the rest returned to their families in the West Bank. King Hussein said another 50 prisoners, who are also residents of West Bank and Gaza, will return to their families soon. The King said those released were in addition to those who are expected to arrive to Jordan within days represent all the Jordanian detainees in Israel.

The King said Israel reaffirmed its obligation to respecting the peace treaty to the letter.

The King added that it was not the first time that Jordan had called for the release of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. "And we renewed the call again until he was released and he got all the needed [medical] care and then he returned

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"We are peace seekers," he called on the world to help the Palestinian people to regain their right. If not, Sheikh Yassin promised that there will be "no pause in the armed operations until the end of the occupation."

In further fallout from the affair, Canada's government maintained a stern public stance after recalling its ambassador to Israel in protest

of the use of forged Canadian passports by the captured Mossad agents.

Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said his Israeli counterpart, David Levy, promised Sunday that he will investigate the forgeries and discuss a possible agreement between the two countries to prevent it from happening again. Axworthy said Levy expressed concern about the strain in

Israeli-Canadian relations, but offered neither an apology nor a clear commitment to forbid any misuse of Canadian documents.

The Canadian Sun newspaper claimed that "agents of the Canadian and Israeli security services met in secrecy in Vancouver (Canada) on the eve of a bungled bid to assassinate a Hamas leader by two men carrying Canadian passports."

However, "the rendezvous was described as a routine get-together in which the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), and its Israeli counterpart Mossad, updated each other on matters of common interest." Nevertheless it added "credence to a comment by Canada's former ambassador to Israel, Norman Spector, during a CBC interview in which he questioned whether Israel acted alone or Canadian intelligence authorities were involved in the attempted assassination in Jordan."

The biggest winner, by all accounts, has been Hamas. "If your enemy fails, it means you grow stronger," Hamas politburo member Mousa Abu Marzook said in an earlier interview. "Now, after the head of our political bureau has been saved and the leader of Hamas, Sheikh Yassin, returns to Gaza, the Hamas organization will be stronger than any time before."

Sheikh Yassin returned to Gaza in triumph, more like a conquering hero than the leader of one of the world's most feared Islamic movements. The revival has discomfited Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who stayed away from Yassin's welcoming party Monday. But it is all the more painful to Netanyahu, because his attempt to smite a deadly foe has rebounded so strongly against him.

**Jordan-Hamas relations**

According to local analysts, the Misha'i gate, as the Israeli press dubbed it, and the release of Sheikh Yassin have uncovered the pragmatic face of Hamas. "Since it was founded, Hamas was a pragmatic organization and the only body

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Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (center) during his press conference which he held at Al Hussein Medical City before his departure to Gaza Monday. He is flanked by Mousa Abu Marzook (left) Khaled Misha'i and Mohammed Nazzari. (Photo Fuad Jbour)

## Netanyahu and Arafat meet to ease tensions, resume talks

By Rebecca Trounson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat held their first meeting in eight months early Wednesday in a bid to defuse tensions that have brought Middle East peace-making to the brink of collapse.

The pre-dawn summit at the Erez border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip was arranged by US special envoy Dennis B. Ross, who told reporters later it was "a very good meeting." Ross said the two leaders agreed to meet on a regular basis and to resume contacts "on all levels between the two sides."

"I think at one point they emphasized that they saw this as a new beginning between the leaders and, indeed, a new beginning for the peace process," Ross said after the two-hour summit. The meeting, the first since February between Netanyahu and Arafat, could signal a thaw in the crisis that

has afflicted peace efforts, which have been shaken by Israeli settlement building and Palestinian suicide bombings.

It came one day after Ross, in the region to try to jumpstart the long-stalled peace efforts, presided over a formal reopening of the negotiations. And it came against a backdrop of a political storm in Israel, where Netanyahu is facing criticism for a botched Israeli assassination attempt in neighboring Jordan. Israel Radio reported that Netanyahu pressed for the summit, perhaps to deflect attention from the growing scandal at home. It was unclear whether it would have that result or whether it could help get the peace process back on track.

On Tuesday, the spiritual leader of the militant Islamic movement Hamas received a steady stream of visitors a day after his return to the Gaza Strip following eight years in Israeli prisons. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin also floated a conditional proposal for a cease-fire

with Israel. While Israeli officials immediately rejected specifics of the heavily qualified offer by Yassin, they welcomed it in principle, noting that the proposal may indicate new openness on the part of Hamas to reach an eventual accommodation with Israel.

"It has a certain significance because it's coming from Yassin," said David Bar-Ilan, a senior aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "And if it indicates a change in position, we welcome it very much." But Bar-Ilan called the

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### Campaigning begins this week in earnest

AMMAN (Star)—Tomorrow will be the first day for candidate registration for the 4 November general elections. This process will last for three days. The registration period also marks the beginning of election campaigns.

"Everything is ready at the Ministry of Interior, although the first day of registration, Friday, will be a holiday but we will be in our offices," said Dr Hashem Al Sabbagh, the general secretary of the ministry told The Star.

Candidates must be Jordanian citizens, aged 30 years or older, and should not have a criminal record. They should be registered voters and do not belong to a banned group or organization.

Dr Sabbagh said he expected a large number of candidates to register to compete for the 80-seat Lower House. Many women candidates are also expected to register.

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## Saigon by any name lives on

By David Lamb

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—OK, so it isn't Saigon anymore. But hold the obituaries. Good times are here again.

Strip away the veneer of communism and there, among the ghosts of the past, this former war-torn capital still has the heart of a hustler and the soul of a dandy.

Actually, the name Ho Chi Minh City never caught on in the first place. It was like turning Boston into John Fitzgerald Kennedy City. It just didn't sound right. It conjured up no

images of Graham Greene on the veranda of tamarind-shaded boulevards or lazy summer days around the pool at the Cercle Sportif. It didn't even carry a whiff of the war that so shaped the city's character.

So Saigon, in casual conversation if not official terminology, continues to be Saigon to most Vietnamese.

But by whatever name, great changes are sweeping across this city of 5 million inhabitants. The odd union of communism and capitalism has unleashed the entrepreneurial

spirit and creative energy of a postwar generation, and Ho Chi Minh City is throbbing to the beat of jackhammers and late-night discos. The peace dividend, at last, is drawing compound interest.

"Times are good, no doubt about it," said Nguyen Van Tran, 22, who has opened a shop specializing in imported food and liquor. "You can smell the opportunity. There's money around."

Across from the remodeled Majestic Hotel, on the far banks of the Saigon River, where Viet Cong guerrillas used to move freely through shantytowns—towering neon signs blink out a red-lettered message for the future: Hitachi...Fuji...Compaq. Their reflection shimmers across the night-

time waters, bathing anchored freighters and gliding sampans in an eerie glow.

The placards of progress, or at least change, are everywhere. Construction cranes perch atop half-finished office high-rises like giant birds. A Marriott, a Hyatt and a Ramada Inn are going up, and a Hard Rock Cafe is coming. Honda motor scooters choke the avenues, and the endless bars on Tu Do (Freedom) Street (now named Dong Khoi, or Uprising)—where GIs once bought "comfort ladies" \$5 shots of "whiskey" that were really just tea—have given way to shops advertising products made by Cartier, Rolex, Christian Dior.

Designer jeans with a cell phone in the hip pocket have replaced the no dai, the flowing

women's garment worn over tight pants, as Generation X's favored style of dress. Caviar is as easy to find as rice. Plans are under way to open a stock exchange (even though only 20 of the 6,000 state-owned enterprises in the city have been privatized), and huge crowds of shoppers are already flocking to the country's first air-conditioned mall, the Superbowl.

If any proof is needed that Ho Chi Minh City is the engine driving Vietnam's transition to a free-market economy, here's some evidence: The city contributes one-third of both the national budget and industrial output. The per capita income (\$1,000 a year) is three times the national average. Seventy percent of US economic activ-



Scooters buzz down a Ho Chi Minh City street, photo by David Lamb

ity in Vietnam and 33 percent of foreign investment are centered here. One thousand foreign companies are represented. The number of Americans living here has grown in less than three years from 300 to 3,000.

But although Vietnam is one of the last surviving Communist states and the party remains well entrenched, particularly in rural areas, the country's real ideology has

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# Arabian thoroughbreds have their day at the Royal Stables

By Ibtisam Awadat  
Special to The Star

A THREE-DAY event of excitement and challenge to choose the most beautiful Arabian thoroughbreds was held at the Royal Racing Club in Al Hammar last week. The event, the Eighth Arabian Horse Festival '97, was held under the patronage of HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein.

The festival was organized by the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation (RJE) in cooperation with the Jordanian Royal Society for Arabian Horses. Princess Alia, who is the president of the RJE, also headed the organizing committee. The festival was inaugurated in the presence of HRH Princess Zein bint Al Hussein, Sharif Jamil Ben Naser, Prince Asem bin Nayef and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Amman Mr Ahmad Al Za'abi. Many Arab and foreign visitors also attended.

In the opening day, camels, (the Hajana), alongside the horsemen of the Public Security Dept. took part in a magnificent display of skill that was pleasing to the crowds. It was a display that involved action and danger at the same time, but the horses were well trained for the event.

The rest of the day, Thursday, was spent on finalizing the registration of horses into different categories. It was noted that the level of participating horses, this year, is

much better than last year. Princes Alia told *The Star*. She added that she was satisfied with the high level of the different competitions.

The Princess added competing horses are of a very high standard. This was shown by the points the horses made and the medals obtained most of which is silver and gold, pointing out that even the horse which came in the sixth position got high marks. The princess said she was grateful to the UAE Equestrian Federation which supported the festival, and also the different establishments in the private sector.

"I am so happy with the participation of Syria, Palestine and United Arab Emirates and the other delegations from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and Iraq," Princess Alia said. "I am satisfied with the media coverage which contributed much in inviting more people to watch and have fun. Also we must say that the judging session witnessed a high participation."

The panel of judges included experts from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Jordan in addition to Australia, France, Poland and the United Kingdom under the supervision of the international expert Peter Upton who is no stranger to Jordan.

He said "when we give points to horses we take three things in consideration, the high quality or the type, the head and neck, the body, the legs and topline."

ment," Mr Upton said adding that the horses are of first class, many of them would be champions anywhere in the world.

Winner of the Middle East Championship was Jerash, which is a stallion owned by Princess Zein and her husband Mr Majdi Al Saleh. He won the title for the fourth time in a row. Princess Zein announced that Jerash will retire after this event and will be kept for breeding.

The results for the beautiful horses in the Middle East Championship were as follows: In the Junior Female Category, the first winner is Karana from the United Arab Emirates. Al Furai, a horse from the Royal Stables won the Junior Male

Category.

In the Senior Female Category, S.B. Wesama, a mare from Netherlands won first place.

There were other competitions such as the most beautiful heads of female horses, which was won by Al Hamama, owned by the Royal Stables. Skad Silly, owned by Al Kheir Stables won first prize for the male category.

The three-day event offered a dressage competition in which four Jordanian junior riders participated.

Princess Alia also opened the photo exhibition by Ibrahim Shalaby and Zohrah which depicts the Arabian horses and the Jordanian landscape.



Princess Alia bint Al Hussein



## Saigon by any name lives on

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always been nationalistic. The urban postwar generation has little interest in politics or communism. What drives it is an almost obsessive quest for education, knowledge and financial success.

"What this generation has, and mine didn't, is opportunity," said Ho Chi Khouch, 65, a professor of history at Ho Chi Minh University. "We looked ahead to war. They look ahead to peace. They're much more independent, dynamic, creative than their fathers were. They don't want to study the subjects we did—history, philosophy, poetry. The majors they're choosing now are business, economics, English, language, computer sciences."

Over its 300 years of history, Ho Chi Minh City has had at least eight names and has long marched to its own drummer. Although most Vietnamese look to Hanoi, the political and intellectual capital, with the same sense of fondness, the French have for Paris. Saigon/Ho Chi Minh has always been where the action is. If Hanoi is Salt Lake City, proper and straight-laced, Ho Chi Minh is New Orleans, flashy and a bit wicked.

The city as it is today evolved out of swamps and marshland after the French arrived as colonizers in 1859. Using forced labor, France filled in canals, built wide boulevards, glitzy casinos, exclusive sporting clubs, grand villas landscaped with palm trees, cathedrals and a state-opium factory at 74 Ha Ba Trung St. Saigon—a French city flowering alone out of a tropical swamp, one writer called it—became the capital of French Indochina and a city nearly as beloved by the French as Paris itself.

Hardly more than a decade after the French left—in 1954, with the fall of Dien Bien Phu—a new war was under way and hordes of Americans had turned Le Loi and Nguyen Hue streets into a sort of mini Fort Bragg. The black market thrived. Vendors blanketed the sidewalks. Prostitution flourished. Capitalism, in its most conspicuous and least attractive form, had arrived.

Ho Chi Minh City's transition from wartime turmoil to peacetime prosperity has not come without peril. Numerous high-profile business tycoons have crashed, brought down by inexperience, mismanagement and the government's favoritism toward state-owned ventures. Corruption is so widespread that many Vietnamese cannot get a bank loan without dispensing bribes. Pollution, unemployment, chaotic traffic and a widening gap between rich and poor all trouble city planners.

Petty—but seldom violent—street crime is so common that hotels advise guests not to venture out with jewelry, watches, money or anything of value. The smiling, dirt-poor cyclo driver (very possibly a former South Vietnamese soldier) who offers to peddle you around the city in the carriage attached to his bicycle turns into a demon once you are his passenger, refusing to stop at your hotel until the price is negotiated upward. Old women in conical hats brush innocently against you on the street—and pfft, as if by magic, the Mont Blanc pen in your shirt pocket disappears.

Western economists note that the burgeoning opportunities of a free-market system, officially adopted by Vietnam in 1986 and bolstered by the lifting of the US trade embargo in 1994, have made it difficult for the city and state companies to attract capable administrators, most of whom can find greater rewards in the private sector. To the disappointment of foreign investors, Vietnam last year reaffirmed its commitment to focusing its energies on revitalizing state-owned enterprises.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Button up, noise affects your health!

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men exposed to noise over a long period may likely be victims of high blood pressure and even heart attack because of the tension that their noisy environment creates.

Experts say tension can, as well as causing diabetes, is responsible for stress, and blood pressure which work together to worsen atherosclerosis. "It's painful when people don't realize how dangerous it is to live in noisy

surroundings," says Dr Haddad.

The highest increase of noise risk is found at construction sites. In the wake of the rapid developments in Jordan, many construction workers would likely attract ear disorders, chest pains and related noise sickness.

Mr Mahmoud Salahat of Masar Co., the contractor in charge of the Wadi Haddadeh Bridge and Tunnel project says "noise is a real serious problem. I have troubles with

my ears. The doctors says my left ear pressure is not normal."

Mr Salahat controls the project and should always be at the site. "We work with different machines and each one makes a lot of noise. Some of my workers also complain of ear disturbances and headache," continued Mr Mahmoud. "With no concrete disposition in sight to control noise and to identify the harm it can cause to our health, the noise disorder rate is twice

that of other workplaces."

"Until the public and the health establishments wake up to what noise can do to harm our health, a lot of people may be admitted to hospital for heart emergencies. Risks of pre-mature death, child disability and cancer would become a burden, if the situation is not control now that is not too late," Dr Haddad suggested.

Noise making is even a fashion, clapping and dancing amidst noisy music. A late night carousal that prevents the next door neighbor from sleeping is everyday life and part of the system. But this is where the risk lies.

Noise is not an airborne disease, it can easily be eradicated through awareness and education. Astonishing results are possible with preventive measures.

Researchers discovered that people living in a calm environment are more often than not less nervous than those in a noisy atmosphere. Environmental factors are believed to play a big role in determining who is susceptible to live longer.

## Netanyahu and Arafat meet to ease tensions

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Hamas leader's conditions—a full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, the dismantling of Jewish settlements and the release of all Palestinian prisoners—"totally unacceptable."

In comments to reporters in Gaza City, Yassin and other senior Hamas leaders also emphasized that the group, whose suicide bombings have killed scores of Israelis, is not proposing a permanent reconciliation with Israel. "If Israel redeployments from Gaza and the West Bank completely and hands (the territories) and (East) Jerusalem to the Palestinians and releases the prison-

ers ... in such case we will stop the military attacks," Yassin said. "But it is just a temporary cease-fire."

Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a Hamas political leader and close aide to Yassin, added that the movement reserves the right to "continue the struggle against Israel to free all Palestinian land," a reference to present-day Israel. Israeli and Palestinian officials and political analysts are watching Yassin's words and actions for signs of what role he will play within Hamas and in the group's relations with the Palestinian Authority and with Israel. He is expected to reinvigorate Hamas and to pose a formidable leadership challenge to Arafat.

## King relates details of Jordan-Israel contacts to defuse Misha'l crisis

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to his family and land," the King said. In exchange for all of this, the King said, the two [agents] were released. The King said "the weapon used in the attack was not found... which could enable us to take further judicial measures, but this will happen if any incident is repeated." He said the first consideration was to save the life of Misha'l.

"During my talk with an international important personality who had a role in defusing this crisis, I said the life of the peace process is linked to the life of this Jordanian," the King said.

The King reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to a comprehensive and just peace and its support for the right of Palestinians on their national soil.

The King said that 48 hours before the incident, he had written a letter to the Israeli prime minister to suggest to him the possibility of a dialogue between Hamas and Israel. But later the Israeli premier claimed that the letter did not reach him on time.

## Yassin new power

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that was keen to push Hamas away was Mr Arafat because he wanted no competition," Dr Labeeb Kamhawi said.

"Even at the height of tension, Hamas always adopted a pragmatic stand and separated the political from the military," he added. "Hamas does not want to destroy Israel—it has never said so."

He added that Hamas employs the military option to serve its political program.

However, Mr Ghazi Al Sa'di, an expert in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, disagreed. "I do not think Hamas will stop its attacks because Israel will not accept any truce with Hamas. It will continue to hit against Hamas inside and outside Palestine," he said.

"It is possible that there is a thinking in Hamas to play a political role in the peace process, but Israel will reject that," Sa'di said.

Jordan and Israel confirmed that Hamas had offered a hiatus in attacks in return for dialogue a day before Mossad agents attacked Misha'l. "It is possible. In politics everything is possible," Sa'di said.

He added that Hamas believes its involvement in this process will achieve what Arafat has failed to achieve. However, he added "I do not think Hamas will commit a political suicide as a result of its political stands."

On his side Dr Kamhawi said the beginning of talks between Hamas and Israel is a matter of time. "It is now a matter of when and after what pretext Hamas would go into dialogue with the Israelis and what kind of Israeli government that would launch this dialogue."

On the other hand, the events of the last two weeks brought under scrutiny the Jordanian-Hamas rapport. Jordan has always confirmed that it recognizes the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority as the political representatives of the Palestinian people. Still Jordan has tolerated the presence of Hamas leaders on its soil.

Analysts believe that Hamas was playing on two tracks: firstly, it would maintain good relations with Arafat; secondly it would protect its interests with Jordan while sending a message to Arafat that they could easily replace him.

Jordan, some analysts believe, is keen to maintain special relations with Hamas, to balance the influence of Arafat's Fatah movement and to secure a say in future plans concerning the West Bank.

"Jordan has always maintained special ties with Hamas in order to use it against any possible infringement by the PLO into Jordanian politics or just to keep Arafat on his toes in order to maintain a greater role for Jordan in the future of the West Bank," said Kamhawi.

Kamhawi concluded that "time will prove that if this marriage of convenience carried a large dowry or not."

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9 OCTOBER 1997

J O R D A N

THE STAR 3

## JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional  
report on Jordanian  
news and views edited  
by Marwan Al Asmar

The candidate and the voters!



### King Hussein's humanitarian gesture

His Majesty King Hussein has offered to pay the medical expenses for the treatment of Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani, who is recovering from a heart attack in a London hospital. The King asked Jordan's ambassador to Britain, Fuad Ayoub, to visit the poet and inform him that His Majesty will pay the hospital's medical bill. King Hussein wished the poet a speedy recovery.

### The first to go from the movement

The Muslim Brotherhood is to expel two of its leading members for failing to abide by the movement's decision to boycott the November parliamentary elections. Both Abdallah Al Akleh and Mohammad Al Hajj have said that they will run for re-election come what may. Earlier this week, the Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood said that anyone who goes against the boycott decision will be expelled from the movement. This of course means that Nawal Al Fouri will also be expelled from the movement if she goes ahead with her decision to run for the elections.

### Naming Amman

Better late than never. The Names and Numbers Dept. of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) has been drawing up plans to give names to roads and streets in the city. More than 7,000 names are now on the agenda. Head of the department, Marwan Alyaan says that this means that 80 percent of the roads in the capital will now be named. GAM's next step is to start putting these names on road signs. Giving names to the roads in Amman doesn't appear to be a new thing. The project has started as early as 1987.

### Taxis on the loose

How much more can the country take! Sixty more taxi offices are being established around the Kingdom. The owners of these offices have already applied for licences way back in June 1996. It is only lately, however, that Minister of Interior Nafith Rashid has given the go-ahead for these offices to operate. About 35 of the offices are in the Amman Governorate alone.

### Jerash man goes on hunger strike

A man from Jerash staged a one-day hunger strike outside the Ministry of Education in Amman last week. He said that he did this because he believes that his right to appointment in the Jerash Educational Directorate was unfairly lost. The Civil Service Commission in Amman appointed another applicant, but the man believes that the post should have gone to him.

### With a little help

The government is being ever so kind in helping candidates in their preparations for the coming elections. Its recent decision to exempt from taxes the "apparatuses" and "instruments" used in the elections campaign as something of a novelty. But this is of course good news to any would-be election seeker.

### NGO's and regional cooperation

A three-day regional conference, titled "Cooperation between NGOs and its Role in the Development Process in the Middle East" has just ended in Amman. Organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Amman and the Beirut-based International Management and Training Institute, the workshop focused on the NGO sector in the region. The event is part of the BUNIAN program which is a European Union co-financed NGO program that is designed to enhance the capacities of the NGOs through managerial training. Representatives from Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon attended the conference.

### Media gaze

A two-day conference on the "Media and press freedom in Jordan" is due to be held between 28-29 October in Amman. Al Urdun Al Jadid Studies Center, the Arab Center for International Media Studies and the London-based Article 19 (International Center Against Censorship) are organizing the event.

### Medical conferences

The fifth Jordan-German conference and 25th venue of the Jordanian Surgeons Society is starting on 13 October at the Royal Cultural Center. There are 50 specialized working papers to be presented in the three-day event. These deal with what is known as public and private surgery. Delegates from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Germany, France and Britain will take part in the event.

## European loan made to upgrade Aqaba port

AMMAN—The European Investment Bank (EIB) has extended ECU 60 million to Jordan to upgrade the Aqaba port and financing investments in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Under the agreement, signed in Amman on 6 and 7 October, the first part of ECU 30 million will be extended to finance the construction of a berthing jetty and purchase of container handling equipment in the Aqaba port. The jetty will make the port more efficient. It is intended that the new jetty will handle bulk cargo, while the container handling equipment will handle industrial goods, whose traffic is expected to grow in the future, following developments in the mining and chemical industries. The second part of ECU 30 million will be extended to the financial development of SMEs in Jordan as support for SMEs in the tourism, retail, tourism and services sectors.

These loans have been approved under the new Mediterranean Partnership agreement, which is making available ECU 2,310 million for 1997-1999 for financing investment projects in the 12 new European Union (EU) investment countries that have signed a cooperation or Mediterranean agreement with the Union. Projects supported here by the EIB include water supply and waste water treatment, telecommunications, transport, electricity and industrial development.



His Majesty King Hussein extended thanks to the Jordanian people and said that this country will remain at the heart of the great Arab nation to face the future challenges and work for the welfare of the coming generations. Addressing a public rally in the Governorate of Amman held at the Al Hussein Sports City Wednesday, the King urged Jordanians to shoulder their responsibilities and choose their representatives in the coming parliamentary elections to the next Lower House. He said Amman will always be open to all peoples from different roots and origins. The King said Israeli leaders have pledged that they will never allow a repeat of the incident two weeks ago when Mossad agents made an attempt on the life of a Hamas official in Jordan.

## AMI seeks to put journalism profession on the right track

AMMAN (Star)—Despite the suspension from publication of 13 weekly newspapers last month, Jordan's press body may have a reason to celebrate after all. A new monthly periodical focusing on Jordanian and Arab media has made its debut last month.

Al Mashreq Al Irti, which is edited by Samir Barhoum, is a no ordinary publication. It is a periodical specialized in local, regional and international media affairs. What's more, it is reputed to be one of a kind in Jordan and the Arab world.

Al Mashreq Al Irti, was licensed this month as "a specialized publication," in accordance with the new temporary Press and Publications Law. It focuses on the practice of journalism as a profession in the Arab world.

It is published by the newly established Arab Media Institute (AMI), which is a private non-governmental organization (NGO)—the Arab equivalent to international press NGOs such as Article 19.

The first issue of the 28-page, tabloid-size periodical, provides an in depth analysis of the government's decision to suspend the publication of most weekly newspapers in Jordan. In addition it has stories on the coverage of Princess Diana's death in the Arab press, including the recent public debate over the sensational press and paparazzi in the Arab



media, and the question of whether "city" or "regional" newspapers can succeed in Jordan.

The issue carries reports and commentaries on press coverage of financial corruption in Jordan, press freedom and obstacles facing journalists in Egypt and other countries. It has translated articles from international publications with direct relevance to the situation in the Middle East.

AMI is concerned with the study of the media and issues facing media practitioners in the Arab World. Also, the institute will fight for raising professional journalistic standards and defending press freedom in Arab countries.

The Amman-based AMI hopes to fill an institutional vacuum and contribute to reforms in Arab journalistic practices.

"There is a need in the Arab world for independent media

press," he added.

However, he said that "what we have in the Arab world today are merely syndicates, not independent media institutions established by the journalists to govern their own profession."

Mr Hawatmeh, who is also the Chief Editor of the Jordan Times English daily, admitted that the institute's mission will "be a tough one."

"The press should govern itself. It should have a code of ethics to keep the government away from interfering in its business," he said.

Despite marked political differences between Arab regimes and in the circumstances governing the press in Arab countries, Hawatmeh said "that does not mean that Arab journalists should not work together, and make sure that journalism is practiced in the right way."

Press Cocktail  
Press

Edited by Raed Al Abed

### Hamas and Jordan: Amicable relations

When it comes to relations between Jordan and Hamas, one should not limit the scope of vision to the humanitarian dimension only, as last week's events have shown. There are other elements which have to be reviewed in terms of their future prospects. This is what Al Dustour's Orah Al Rintawi wrote in his daily column.

Al Rintawi says "The distance between the 'humanitarian' and 'political' dimensions tend to diminish, under certain circumstances, giving the whole issue a new perspective."

A series of initiatives made by Jordan fall under the humanitarian dimension, says Al Rintawi. They include Jordan's role in securing the release of Dr Moussa Abu Marzouk, preventing his deportation to the Jewish state, the recent release of Shiekh Ahmed Yassin from prison in Israel and saving the life of Khaled Misha' after the failed assassination attempt on his life.

So, definitely, Rintawi adds, the past week's events must have had a special political value as well.

Hamas, for example, he says, has to bear the consequences of such a relationship, which requires a sort of political flexibility to make a change in its radical stance and its course of struggle.

If such a change is made by Hamas leaders outside, as a result of repeated Jordanian gestures which include offering sanctuary, will it also be the case with the movement's leadership in the Palestinian territories?

How will Hamas, being the backbone of Palestinian opposition, react to the apparent and strong contradiction in its stances? It has the most cordial relations with Jordan and at the same time it is most critical of the Palestine National Authority.

This is despite the fact that both sides have concluded peace accords with Israel and shared the same political vision of a peaceful settlement.

Al Rintawi wonders if Jordan could also bear the consequences of the intense political existence of Hamas on its territory. Some believe, the writer adds, that the objective behind this approach is to create a balance between the existence of Fatah and other Palestinian movements in Jordan and Hamas inside Palestine.

### Politics rather than publicity stunts

In his daily column in Al Ra'i, Tareq Masarweh points out that all Jordanians and Palestinians were in need to feel and express that sort of great happiness for the return of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin to Gaza and as well the return of Khaled Misha' to his home.

In the middle of a gloomy and depressing atmosphere, Masarweh says, we were strongly waiting for a candle to be lit. He says that it was probably destined that Israeli terrorists would soon arrive in Amman...using forged passports to commit a crime. However, the columnist wonders if Amman could have acted beyond its real power to get a much higher price for seizing the Israeli Mossad criminals?

"Naturally," he adds, "Jordan could have used the opportunity to underline Israel's state sponsored terrorism and could have taken the criminals to court." However, politics rather than theatrics dictated the next move, Masarweh says. "What would have followed the publicity stunts?" he asks.

He defends Jordan's action and says "let us admit that we have grown up under the influence of the media and heated speeches. But to what end had these guided us?" The writer adds: "We have ended up with a half century of defeats and we have paid a high cost in 1967, when we became prisoners of our publicity stunts."

## The Red Rose Times

6 October 1997

Volume 1, Issue 1

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## Our Say...

### Israeli terrorism: Netanyahu unmasked

IT WOULD take some time for all the secret details surrounding the Mossad fiasco in Jordan to become public knowledge. But as more sensational revelations began to sink in, it became apparent that the decision to "liquidate" the political leader of Hamas in Jordan was taken at the highest level possible in the Israeli government. This was no rogue operation taken by Mossad agents behind the prime minister's back. The only scandal surrounding the so-called Misha'i Affair was that the assassination attempt had failed and two of the assassins were caught by Jordan.

In fact, the decision to murder Misha'i in Amman was taken by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself in spite of certain reservations by Mossad officials. This was a state policy from top to bottom.

Democratic countries do not consider the assassination of political opponents an official policy of the state. That's called state-sponsored terrorism. It is not different from any other form of terrorism.

Two years ago at Sharm Al Sheikh summit, Israel sought international commitment to fight terrorism. That commitment did not give it the authority or the right to violate the sovereignty of independent states, to forge Canadian and European passports, to kidnap political opponents, to torture and kill prisoners, to starve an entire nation and deny it its political rights under the law. But Israel did all that. The Misha'i Affair is only a case in point. It is not the exception for Israel which sees itself above laws and agreements.

Netanyahu's brand of state terrorism is worse than any kind of terrorism that afflicts the Middle East today. It is a disgrace for all Israelis to be made accomplices in such heinous crimes. Where does it all stop, we ask? Where does Netanyahu draw the line? What more can we expect of him? What differentiates him from common criminals if he knowingly breaks laws, treaties and agreements and hopes to get away with it?

The Israeli public must not allow such criminal behavior to pass unjudged. This is a question of politics by other means, of waging a secret war in foreign capitals and of recklessly fracturing a peace process that seems to have had enough. Israeli terrorism is not a minor issue on the agenda. It is the main issue today.

How can we negotiate in good faith and honor treaties and agreements when even after the scandal, Israeli officials continue to boast that they will hunt down their opponents anywhere? Does that mean that we can expect more Mossad agents with forged passports to drop in to shoot Jordanian citizens every now and then?

Netanyahu's irrational and dangerous policies go to prove that he is not a man to be trusted. The Misha'i Affair, and its consequences, has reshuffled the political cards again. The question is how can we deal with a man who lies and cheats and then expect him to honor his word? ■

## Letter from the Levant

# The Misha'i Affair: How Netanyahu managed to shoot himself in the foot

By Osama El-Sherif

IT HAD all the elements of a best seller spy novel: a hi-tech murder plot, mysterious assassins with forged foreign passports, a political leader of a militant Palestinian group, a thrilling car chase in the streets of Amman followed by a fist fight and a police arrest. This led to secret contacts and deals between governments and leaders leading to the historic release of Hamas' spiritual leader from Israeli prison. And these are only the highlights.

But this was no cloak and daggers action movie from Hollywood. As facts began to emerge, what was first termed as a "minor scuffle" is initially termed by the official Jordanian spokesman, has turned out to be one of the most sensational undercover Mossad operations in years.

The implications of the failed attempt on the life of the political leader of Hamas, Khaled Misha'i, are yet to be fully uncovered. The attack failed and as Misha'i fought for his life at Al Hussein Medical City, His Majesty King Hussein sought to control a crisis that was threatening to drag the region into a new cycle of violence.

It is not yet clear how an antidote for the suspicious chemical agent that was injected into Misha'i's head by two Mossad agents was delivered to Jordan. But high-level contacts between Jordan, which now had two of the six Israeli agents in custody, and Israel resulted in some sort of a deal. Israel supplied the antidote and soon after it agreed to pardon and release the founding father of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, who was serving a life sentence in an Israeli jail.

It did not stop there. Israel also agreed to allow Sheikh Yassin to return to Gaza and free some 22 Palestinian and Jordanian prisoners in return for her two agents. There was no way to describe Israel's humiliation as it celebrated its new year. The present that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was hoping to deliver to his people has turned into a curse.

The botched assassination attempt and the arrest by Jordan of the two would-be assassins, who were carrying forged Canadian passports, sent tremors in all directions.

At one level, it was a slap in the face of the Israeli government and its infamous Mossad secret service. On another level, the incident threatened already tense relations between Jordan and Israel, two countries bound by a peace treaty that prohibited hostilities against each other. More seriously, the scandal infuriated

those who were carrying a catastrophe through his reckless policies.

If Netanyahu appeared as the loser, King Hussein, on the other hand, emerged as a winner. He was able to contain a dangerous crisis and move quickly ahead of everybody else. By securing the antidote from the Israelis, the King was able to save the life of Khaled Misha'i. No other man could have arm-stronged the Israelis

in a friendly country?

Meanwhile, the triumphant return of Sheikh Yassin to Gaza, less than a week after his arrival in Amman, must have added to Netanyahu's plight. He was given a hero's welcome by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, proving to everybody that Hamas has never been more popular among Palestinian masses. If the aim few weeks ago was to eradicate Hamas, through the combined efforts of the PNA and Israel, the events of the last few days have brought an opposite result.

If there is a moral to this story it is this: Netanyahu has proven that he is not a man the Arabs can partner with to save the peace process. On the other hand, the release of Sheikh Yassin has dealt a blow to American and Israeli efforts to push Arafat into stamping out the Islamic group. The timing for Yassin's release could not have been worse for those seeking to destroy Hamas.

For the moment Netanyahu seems to have lost the initiative. He will be busy in the coming few weeks cleaning up the mess he has created: a political crisis with Jordan and Canada, facing his opponents and the Israeli public at home and most importantly trying to prove to the Americans that he is still in charge and will survive the Misha'i affair.

On the other hand, it is ironic that Netanyahu has given a tremendous boost to the very organization he was trying to destroy. The militant Islamic organization has now gained ground both inside the Palestinian territories and abroad. The influence of Hamas on Palestinian decision making process will become noticeable in the coming days and weeks.

The release of their spiritual leader has given Hamas followers an important moral lift, which should give Palestinian President Yasser Arafat something to worry about since Sheikh Yassin has decided to return to Gaza to be close to Arafat's PNA.

King Hussein, meanwhile, has proven again that Jordan is an important player in the Middle East peace process and that any future initiative will have to pass through Amman. ■



the Canadian government, which recalled its ambassador in Tel Aviv for consultations and condemned the Israeli action.

By mid-week the Misha'i scandal, as the Israeli press called it, had turned into a major political bombshell for Netanyahu, who had authorized the assassination mission against reservations by the head of the Mossad.

The scandal has dealt a severe blow to Netanyahu at home. Many prominent Israeli figures have voiced their disapproval of Netanyahu's policies and called for a special investigation into the fumbled operation. But most importantly, Netanyahu was unmasked as a man who cannot be trusted; a dangerous man who in the eyes of leaders and people in the re-

gion could very easily cause a catastrophe through his reckless policies.

he has put on weight and is no longer attractive to the Israeli public.

On 8 September, two days before Mrs Albright's talks in Israel, Mrs Peled-Eichanan, the mother of a 14-year old girl killed in a bombing on 4 September, said:

"I'm very angry to think that my government betrayed me...they sacrifice our children

for their megalomania..." Mrs Peled-Eichanan is the daughter of the late Maj. Gen. Motti Peled, a one-time Gaza military commander. Mrs Albright tried but failed to visit her in Jerusalem home, but she managed to visit Leah Rabin. ■

The author is an energy consultant living in Amman

## Letters to the Editor

### Canadian involvement with Mossad

To The Editor,

The attempt to murder Hamas leader Khaled Misha'i by two Mossad agents in Jordan, using Canadian passports, has more than a passing similarity to past incidents.

In fact, one must question the active involvement of the government of Canada, in assisting the murderers of Mossad.

Have you all forgotten the active involvement of the former prime minister of Canada, Joe Clark, who wanted to move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem?

Have you forgotten that it was the same Joe Clark, who personally issued six forged Canadian passports for use by the six CIA spies in hiding in the Canadian Embassy in Tehran?

Here in Canada, a former senior Mossad agent, Victor Ostrovsky has admitted publicly to the media, that Mossad has a room full of Canadian passports, for use by its assassins.

One must question whether Jews with the Canadian Ministry for External Affairs, with the full co-operation of the Canadian government, supplied the Canadian passports, to be used by the Israeli murderers???

Grosvenor International  
intergroup@grosvenor.net

### Use of passports by Mossad not approved

To The Editor,

Thanks for having your paper on the Internet. Also I hope that Jordanians realize that the apparent use of Canadian Passports by Mossad representatives is not approved of by Canadians.

Ken Manning  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
manning@freenet.net

## Remembering things past

By Christian Doumit

IN 1977, Yitzhak Rabin resigned as Prime Minister of Israel after his wife Leah was killed in a terrorist attack. Rabin was described as "illegal accounts" in the US. Twenty years on, his successor Benjamin Netanyahu is in the same position as premier in spite of major scandals which seem to reoccur with depressing regularity.

Ever since he took over the reins of government in Israel, there has been friction between the military and the political establishment. This is because Netanyahu, the first directly-elected prime minister of Israel with enhanced power, is a man who rarely consults any one beyond his coterie of aides and followers.

He often appears to take decisions on the spur of the moment and army officers have been complaining that lack of coordination is causing problems. One example of this was the opening of the Jerusalem tunnel in September 1996. Top officers later said that this was undertaken without agreement from the military. The tunnel opening led to violence which left some 80 people dead.

There is disquiet within the armed forces about the way the peace process is being undermined. In October 1996 as the implications of Netanyahu's policies began to sink in, the Israeli media published an unusual joint letter from 33 army officers and soldiers who complained that since the Likud Premier took office, "we get the impression that you are making every effort to drag us into an unjustified war and to melt any chance for peace.... This situation is no different today.

Netanyahu does not trust many of the top officers sus-

pecting some of them of holding leftist views. The highly popular chief of staff Gen. Amnon Shahak, who served as a chief negotiator with the Palestinian falls within this category. In December 1996 another senior officer, Gen. Oren Shohar, a key peace negotiator resigned after being suspected for having held private meetings with opposition leader Shimon Peres without informing his superiors. As a result of the friction between the right-wing leadership and the military, senior Israeli officers began taking notes at all "high level meetings" with government officials to protect themselves from any controversies or conflicts of interest.

Another recent example is the "Bar On Affair." In this scandal, Premier Netanyahu was accused of conspiring to appoint under-qualified lawyer Roni Bar On as Attorney General. Netanyahu was saved from criminal proceedings and a government collapse, only because Bar On's replacement Elyakim Rubinstein did not find him culpable, although a police investigation recommended a charge be brought against the Prime Minister.

Now, after 20 months of Netanyahu's government and Mossad's failed assassination attempt of Khaled Misha'i, the Israelis have realized how clever their prime minister has been. A telegraphic man who knows how to talk to the press remains oblivious to the fact that

he has put on weight and is no longer attractive to the Israeli public.

On 8 September, two days before Mrs Albright's talks in Israel, Mrs Peled-Eichanan, the mother of a 14-year old girl killed in a bombing on 4 September, said:

"I'm very angry to think that my government betrayed me...they sacrifice our children

for their megalomania..." Mrs Peled-Eichanan is the daughter of the late Maj. Gen. Motti Peled, a one-time Gaza military commander. Mrs Albright tried but failed to visit her in Jerusalem home, but she managed to visit Leah Rabin. ■

The author is an energy consultant living in Amman



(News Name Clinton is withholding his support for a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines unless it contains a nine-year delay aimed at protecting U.S. troops in South Korea.)

## Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek

### Confusion!

EXCITEMENT AND rumor have spread on the streets of Jordan with the habitual self-proclaimed experts and pretenders "in the know" opening their social salons, or corner coffee-shops to discuss the fast and confusing events that have taken place recently in our capital. Each allegedly well informed guru, has surrounded himself with a following resembling historical scenes from the mosques of Ummayyad in Syria or Abbasid Iraq. The only difference being, is that in the past, knowledge was being discussed, but currently, rumors and misinformation rule the day.

One can neither blame people for their pastimes, nor for their entertainment, and on top of it, their isn't much to build on in order to have an educated guess. Nevertheless, if one follows closely the recent developments with some sense of reason and rationality, then perhaps many arising misconceptions may be altered.

One wonders why, all of the sudden "Hamas" is being talked about in terms of a new and qualitatively acknowledged status in Jordan. It is a well-known fact that "Hamas" had always a political representation in our country, and their office has always been open to conduct political work within the constitutional laws of Jordan, and in an atmosphere of political pluralism.

If there were any difficulties in relations between the state and "Hamas", it was due to the delicate situation in the West Bank, and the continued conflict between all parties there. The presence of "Hamas" in Jordan has never been a secret, and their political work has always been within the confines of democratic practice.

The release of Sheikh Yassin, in response to HM King Hussein's appeal, is a clear acknowledgement of Jordan's moderate role in the region, and the credibility of its positions as a central party in the balance of peace in the area. It is not surprising in this respect, to release the ailing Sheikh to the medical care of our hospitals, for Jordan has always demanded the release of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, not for any motive but for the advancement of the cause of peace and the re-building of a somewhat shaky confidence between the Arabs and Israel.

Sheikh Yassin himself, is a living example of the misconceptions perpetuated about his beliefs while in incarceration in Israeli jails. He has openly expressed his belief in co-existence, so long as Palestinian pride, dignity, and rights are preserved. The stories of exile and deportation, which filled the mass media organs, can only serve the purpose of those parties who wish to silence the thoughts of the ailing Sheikh Yassin, who spoke frankly and in complete liberty in Amman.

As for the recent violent acts on the streets of Amman, one cannot suppress the imagination of the story-tellers and conspiracy theorists. There will always be some confusion when information is scarce, and at times contradictory, but nevertheless, it remains hard to accept criticisms, against those institutions working to ascertain those facts that seem like a jigsaw puzzle. In any liberal democratic country, facts remain obscure until such a time, that the relevant governmental organs have finished their investigations, and reached certain conclusions.

It is wrong to demand my statement while investigations are underway. Just those investigations may be jeopardized in an unduly manner, defeating their own purpose. Jordan is a democratic country, and applies the rule of law, therefore, there is no need for questioning our integrity, and our purpose to achieve justice. ■

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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.



## Business scene

■ The 53rd general conference of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) is expected to convene in Amman on 3 November. Being the first to be held in the Middle East, this conference will be attended by more than 650 participants representing global aviation airlines and organizations. International news agencies will provide coverage of the venue. Choosing Jordan to host this event reflects IATA's trust in the aviation industry in the Kingdom. Royal Jordanian, as a host airline corporation, will send invitations to the local media to cover the activities of the conference. Assistant Deputy Director for Marketing and Sales in RJ, Mr Hussein Al Dabbas, has been chosen to head the press and information committee for this conference.

■ The Middle East Insurance Co. has generated net profits estimated at JD 422,000 during the first half this year. This shows a rise of 4.4% compared with the same time last year. The company's balance sheet by last June closed at JD 12.06 million. Its shareholders rights reached more than JD 3.38 million by last June. The company's capital is JD 2.2 million.

■ The Jordan Loan Guarantee Corp. has established a consultant services unit which will be responsible for financing small and medium size projects and support its funding programs to encourage local enterprises. Such a step is targeted at reducing the level of unemployment and will serve the interest of the national economy. This is the first unit of its kind in the country to provide relatively free consultant services for those who are willing to carry out small and medium size investments. The unit will help Jordanian investors to review their plans and guide them to conduct feasibility studies before executing their projects. In addition, it provides borrowers with technical assistance and acts as a liaison between them and the banks that finance their projects. Services of this unit cover wide scale of developing and private sector ventures operating in agriculture, industrial and tourism services, transport, education and information.

### Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 8 October

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFr	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

# Slump in construction sector seen a "reflection" of general mood

THE BOOM in the construction and real estate sector which followed the second Gulf War, was slowly followed by a "rut". Today, the industry is in a middle of a recession.

Some analysts say that such a recession is not limited to the construction sector, but is part of a wider trend that is experienced by other sectors of the economy.

But others are more sanguine pointing out that any investor is compelled (because of such recession) to think seriously before investing in lands or property.

However, others who trade in land see no hazard in buying, arguing that even though there is no profit at the moment, there is no loss either. They are sure that land prices will see a noticeable hike as the economy picks up.

Deputy President of the Engineers Association Hosni Abu Ghaida, sees the weak activity in the contracting and construction sectors as related to the economy. "Such a de-

cline applies to other sectors, however, this sector is the most vulnerable to the general mood of distress and uncertainty that refers to political and economic factors," he tells *The Star*.

Of course, as experts in this type of investments argue any investor is keen to employ his capital in the purchase of land, hoping to receive in return, earnings that might exceed 15 percent or more. On the other hand, investors may prefer to just deposit their money in the bank and get a regular interest rate that could reach 10 percent.

But, some of those involved in the construction sector point out that when recession hits this activity (considered by Jordanians as the most profitable), then the situation tends to be critical.

"Officials have to realize that the decline in the construction sector is sending alarm bells," Abu Ghaida adds.

There was a 26 percent decrease this year, and this rate

will rise to 30 per cent. Owners of construction companies are complaining about the difficulty they are facing in collecting their money once the project is completed or from pressures by banks or from the income tax people.

Whenever a contractor or engineer carries out a government project, he is obliged to pay the workers salaries. This causes a "circle of debts and interests," which he has to incur if the project is to go ahead.

Mr Abu Ghaida continues to say that all indications reveal that the size of big projects in the country is very small. Statistics show that the number of licensed big projects (covering 10,000 square metres) is only 10. This number implies that there are problems related to financing for consultants and contractors. What is needed locally, is to attract outside Jordanian capital and offer investors all facilities.

"Certainly, Abu Ghaida adds "if we were able to prevent capital flights and re-employ them inside the country, then they will contribute a great deal to flourishing our economy."

While many officials between now and then stress that the investment climate is encouraging Abu Ghaida says that "so far, these [government] incentives have not succeeded in attracting these capitals back."

He, therefore, calls on the government to embark on bold measures to minimize restrictions on investments and reduce taxes.

On the regional level, the contractors and consultants are currently negotiating with their Arab counterparts to establish federations to unite and compete with foreign contractors.

Then the engineering offices can co-operate with these federations to enhance their competitiveness," Abu Ghaida maintains.

Referring to the volume of constructions' consultations in the Arab countries, he says that they were about \$40 billion from 1975 to 1985, \$2 billion of which were conducted with Arab offices, whereas the remaining \$38 billion were with foreign consultants.

However, some stress that foreign expertise in this field should be replaced by local and Arab ones and they argue that the potential is there.

Abu Ghaida says that in the Arab World there are 600,000 engineers who are highly qualified. These are joined by many contractors who have large funds and are ready to finance giant projects. However, frustration hinders people from taking forward steps. Moreover, they are not given the chance to show and exploit such expertise and skill.

For example, some may not hesitate to pay JD 15,000 monthly for a foreign contractor, while if they pay only JD1500 monthly for a local engineer, they blame themselves for giving him the confidence to carry out their project and claim he doesn't



Abu Ghaida

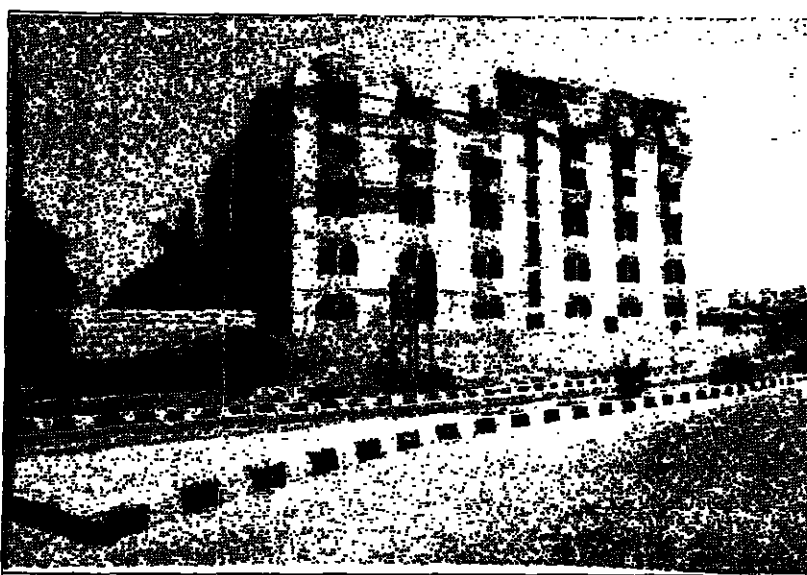
deserve such a sum.

The vice president of contractors Association, Mohammed Al Tahineh attributes the recession in the contracting sector to the lack of allocations to carry out projects in the public sector, and the restrictions governing this profession in the private sector.

What also faces this vital sector is that big projects in the Kingdom (either in the public or in the private sector) are mainly awarded to foreign contractors.

An owner of a real estate office stresses that the slump in the construction sector started in 1985. When the returns came back to settle in Jordan after the Gulf War in 1990, the lands' purchase and building activity saw a noticeable hype. However, such a phenomenon did not last long. After the signing of the peace process, people became uncertain about any further improvement in the economic conditions so they stopped buying or investing in properties.

But another contractor comments on the issue from a local aspect. He attributes the reduction to the existence of many real estate offices.



Scenes like these are becoming scarcer in Amman today

## Eyes on south-east Asia as currencies face more turbulence

By James Kyng

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN currencies are set for another turbulent week as a confluence of political and economic concerns weigh heavily on financial market sentiment.

The focus of regional jitters last week shifted from

Thailand and Malaysia to Indonesia. The rupiah slumped to Rp3,120 to the US dollar last Friday, losing 14 percent of its value on the week. The stock market's main index plunged by 4 percent on Friday.

Fears in Jakarta center on the possibility that high interest rates which are required

to defend the rupiah may precipitate a banking crisis which would savage many of the country's small and poorly capitalised banks.

The rupiah's steep decline last week also unmasked concern that many large Indonesian companies may have borrowed overseas more heavily than previously

believed. Late last week some of these companies were searching urgently in a thin market for US dollars with which to service foreign loans, a number of which are apparently unhedged, observers said.

Further marked weakness in the rupiah, which has fallen by 34 percent since 1 July, could push one or more severe conglomerates into severe financial straits.

Thailand, the original epicentre of south-east Asia's financial tremor, has been relatively calm of late. However, that reflects not so much a return of confidence as a suspension of foreboding.

Sentiment will be tested when Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, Thailand's prime minister, visits Japan on Wednesday to try to secure Japanese banks' agreement to roll over debts owed by Thailand's private sector.

Many economists believe that the Japanese are unimpressed by his progress pushing through painful but necessary economic reforms. Doubts also attend a scheduled announcement on October 15 about the restructuring of Thailand's financial sector.

Amaret Sil-on, chairman of the committee overseeing restructuring strategies for 58 suspended finance companies, indicated last week that Mr Chavalit was suggesting a softer line on the finance companies.

Malaysia, which has suffered a 25 per cent depreciation in the ringgit since 1 July, remains unpredictable.

The anti-foreign, anti-free-market rhetoric of Mahathir Mohamad, prime minister, has the power to touch off a domino-effect in regional currency depreciations.

Most economists believe, however, that Kuala Lumpur is unlikely to further curb free-market mechanisms or ban currency trading even though Dr Mahathir regards it as "immoral". Stock market investors are hoping that the more moderate stance adopted by Anwar Ibrahim, deputy prime minister and finance minister, will prevail.

Many hope Mr Anwar will announce a budget this month aimed at slowing growth, boosting savings and tax revenues, and eliminating a shortfall between savings and investment which economists regard as the clearest indicator that Malaysia has been spending beyond its means.

## Hughes to build Thuraya Satellite Phone System for Mideast

ABU DHABI—Hughes Space and Communications International Inc. (HSCI) and Thuraya Satellite Telecommunications Company of United Arab Emirates signed a contract recently for a satellite-based mobile phone system to serve the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe including Turkey, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

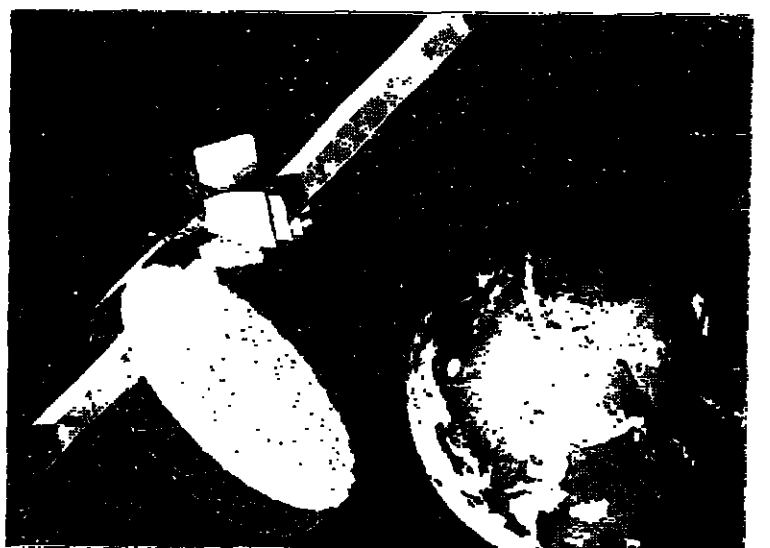
Thuraya and Hughes concluded two weeks of final negotiations with a signing ceremony on 11 September in Abu Dhabi. Muhammad Hassan Omran, chairman of Thuraya, and Michael J. Houterman, HSCI president, signed on behalf of their companies.

The ceremony, which was held at the ETISALAT Head Office in Abu Dhabi, was also attended by Thuraya's project manager, Youssef Al Sayed, and marketing manager, Jamal Al Jarwan, along with senior executives of Thuraya, HSCI and a number of invited guests.

This will be the largest satellite communications project in the region, with an estimated total cost of \$1 billion and a coverage area encompassing nearly 1.8 billion people. The project cost includes manufacture of two high-power satellites, launch services for the first satellite, insurance, ground facilities and a quarter of a million handheld telephones.

Hughes, of Los Angeles, will provide Thuraya a turnkey system with two GEO-mobile body-stabilized satellites, ground facilities and Mobil telephones. Thuraya, a privately held company owned by prominent organizations from the region, will select the launch vehicle later.

Hughes will deliver the first satellite in 31 months, enabling Thuraya to begin operations in the year 2000. The second spacecraft will be a ground spare, to be launched at a later date. The contract also has a provision for a third satellite to be ordered when needed. The satellite will operate in geosta-



tionary orbit, transmitting and receiving calls through a single 12.25-meter-aperture reflector. On-board digital signal processing will route the calls directly from one handheld unit to another, or to a terrestrial network.

Omran stated, "We have successfully concluded the final contract agreement with Hughes to develop, construct and operate the Thuraya Mobile Satellite System." Omran added, "Today is considered the beginning for Thuraya's journey to orbit." The Thuraya satellite is scheduled for launch in May 2000 and will operate commercially by September 2000. Thuraya's business objective is to extend mobile coverage and service to users from the Indian subcontinent, crossing Central Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe including Turkey, to North Africa.

"Thuraya will enable business people to stay in touch while travelling in this region, as well as extend the most modern services to areas that lack telephones now," said HSCI's Houterman. "This project also establishes Hughes as not only the world's leading supplier of satellites, but also of entire space-based communications systems."

The Thuraya system will offer GSM-compatible mobile telephone services in the region. The satellite will employ advanced digital processing to create a very large number of spot beams that can be redirected wherever needed, even after the satellite is placed in orbit, from big cities to rural areas and even at sea.

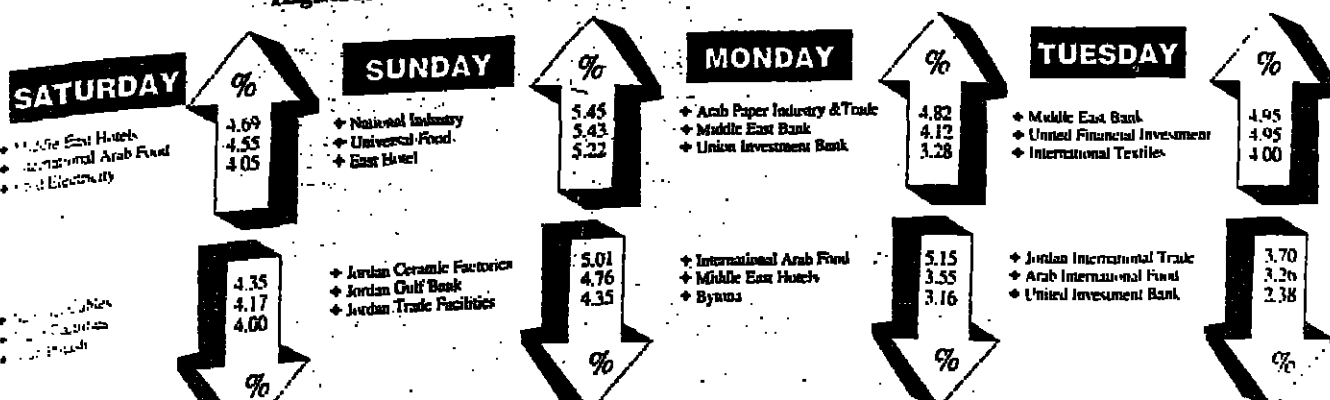
Thuraya will work very closely in the forthcoming period with service providers in the coverage area to build up service agreements.

The Thuraya board of directors extends special thanks to the Thuraya Project Team, staff of Emirates Telecommunications Corporation ETISALAT and the ArabSat legal and technical team who have contributed greatly in the negotiations process.

### MARKET WATCH

4 - 7 October

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market



General Price Pointer	174,920	174,700	174,010	173,930
Trade Volume	1028021	576103	1030765	1131085
Stock Volume	776219	496949	848843	487108
Highest Traded Stocks	240358	44000	197346	353177
	+ Tourism & Hotels	+ Phosphate Mines	+ Housing Bank	

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646494

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## New revelations on the Misha'l Affair

# King considered breaking off relations with Israel if it did not deliver antidote

By Barton Gellman

AMMAN—As Hamas leader Khaled Misha'l drove to his office here one morning last month, two men were loitering outside the door. One was dark and muscular, the other bearded and blond. According to five witnesses, the blond fell in behind Misha'l as he left his car and extended an arm to the Hamas leader's left ear. Misha'l, a lead-colored instrument wrapped in tape came a loud popping sound, Misha'l said, and a shivering sensation ran down his spine "like an electric shock."

Within minutes of the 25 September attack, Misha'l's bodyguard would run the men down and subdue them in a bloody fistfight a mile away. Within hours, Misha'l, 41, would lie perilously close to death in a military hospital with uncontrollable vomiting and respiratory arrest.

By the following day, US and Jordanian officials said, the two captured assassins' cover identities as Canadian tourists had unraveled, and their Jordanian interrogators had recognized them as agents of Mossad, the Israeli espionage agency.

The nearly two weeks since what is described here and in Israel as a botched assassination attempt have been some of the costliest for Israel in the history of its storied security services. His Majesty King Hussein, Israel's closest Arab ally, was so enraged by the attack in his capital that close confidants said Sunday he came to the brink of breaking relations with the Jewish state.

Canada, protesting the breach of previous promises to stop forging its passports, recalled its ambassador to Israel. According to Israeli opposition leader, Ehud Barak, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told him this week that he himself had directed the effort to kill Misha'l. Senior US officials, who have participated in American efforts at damage control, confirmed that the orders came from the highest levels of Israel's government.

Yet after spraying what US and Jordanian officials described as a lethal nerve toxin through the Hamas leader's skin, Israel was compelled to meet Jordanian and American demands to supply the antidote—an extraordinary if indirect admission of Israeli spons-

sorship of an assassination attempt.

The US and Jordanian sources said Mossad agents still in Jordan, participants in the operation who carried the antidote in case of accident, turned it over to Jordanian doctors the following day.

Misha'l's revival from the gates of death—US officials said the poison, which they declined to name, would have killed him within 48 hours—in some ways prefigured a resurrection of his Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas.

Hamas, a militant anti-Israeli group, had been on the defensive recently, its spokesman arrested in Jordan and its mosques and social-service centers shut down in the West Bank and Gaza Strip amid the first serious crackdown on the organization by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat since early 1996.

But in Netanyahu's efforts to calm the crisis with Jordan—he flew secretly to Amman last weekend, but Israeli and Jordanian officials said the King refused to see him—the Israeli premier not only saved Misha'l's life but freed the founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, from a life term in an Israeli prison. That marked the end, for now at least, of further pressure on Hamas by Arafat or King Hussein.

Arafat, although at odds with fundamentalists, felt compelled by strong Islamic constituencies to hasten to Yassin's hospital bedside and cover the popular religious leader with kisses to the forehead and cheeks.

Crown Prince Hassan, returning from an emergency trip to see President Clinton in Washington, said in an interview at his palace guest house Sunday that he feels "waves of nausea still" when he thinks of Israel's betrayal and its consequences. "I think it is an act of gross stupidity," he said. "We are always reminded that Israel is the only democratic state in the region...and yet you find the only democratic state in the region being associated with an act of terror. What is the point of our meeting in Sharm Al Sheikh (in 1996) condemning terror in all its aspects?"

In public, the Israeli government is saying little about the debacle. Cabinet Secretary Dan Naveh read a brief statement this week announcing that "the government of Israel refrains at this time from commenting on media reports regarding activities against

Hamas leader Khaled Misha'l."

Opposition leader Barak, a former armed services chief of staff who met one-on-one with Netanyahu on Sunday, described the private meeting for Israeli Television shortly afterward. "The prime minister has taken responsibility," he said. "He said he approved it, and he's responsible."

"It was a pathetic decision and would never have been made by any other prime minister since (the late Menachem) Begin," Barak added. His remarks contributed to a bitter political debate that has featured finger-pointing among Israeli security services and calls for the resignations of Netanyahu and Mossad chief Danil Yatom. The attempt on Misha'l's life had its origin, according to Israeli officials, in an emergency cabinet meeting 30 July. Two Hamas suicide bombers, in synchronized explosions, killed 16 Israelis that day in the Mahane Yehuda produce market in Jerusalem. The cabinet, according to two of its members, voted a broadly worded authorization to hunt down Hamas military leaders wherever they could be found.

It did not approve specific targets or set constraints. Late in September, two Israeli agents checked into Amman's Intercontinental Hotel, posing as Canadian tourists. According to documents translated into Arabic and then back to English, their passports identified them as Shawn Kendall, 28, and Barry Beads, 36. On the morning of 25 September, Misha'l's driver grew suspicious when an olive-green Hyundai sedan appeared to be following their car. Just before they reached the office in a new commercial district of southern Amman, the green car passed them and drove out of sight. The driver, who asked that he not be named, said he spotted the two foreigners loitering as he pulled up in front of Misha'l's office.

He told Misha'l to circle the rear of the car and meet him at the driver's door, and he placed himself between Misha'l and the suspicious men. Raghad Mohammed, who works in the adjacent infant-products store, said the blond foreigner had some kind of device strapped to his right arm with white tape. "He reached toward (Misha'l's) neck, and I heard a bang," she said. Misha'l's driver, poised for trouble, thrust



HM King Hussein, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin at the Hussein Medical Center, Thursday

upward on the blond man's arm and knocked him to the ground. The man's glasses tumbled to the pavement, and the driver snatched them up. According to three witnesses, the two foreigners then fled on foot.

Mohammed Abu Saif, 30, Misha'l's bodyguard, was just arriving in a taxi car. A powerfully built man with martial-arts training, he saw the scuffle and sprinted after the fleeing Israelis. The muscular one, who was slower, turned and threw a soda can at his pursuer but missed.

Rounding a corner after 200 yards, the Israelis jumped into an olive green Hyundai rental car bearing license number 5374. "The car was already moving," Abu Saif said in an interview. "It looked as if they had trained to do that." Abu Saif stood in the center of the street and waved down an oncoming private car. The driver accelerated after the Hyundai, which rounded two curves at high speed and then unexpectedly stopped to let the Israelis off after less than a mile.

Jordanian officials speculated that the Israeli escape plan called for a switch to another car. When he emerged from the Hyundai, the blond man no longer had the instrument strapped to his arm, and the weapon used against Misha'l has not been recovered. Abu Saif, whose account was backed in several details by witnesses who gathered to watch the fight, said he caught the muscular dark man by the back of his shirt. The blond man pivoted and slammed a hard object into Abu Saif's head, leaving him with a wound that took 18 stitches and eight days in a hospital to repair.

"I got the heavily built guy and hit him with a right in the face and dropped him on the ground," Abu Saif said. "The second guy attacked me, and I hit him in the face. Then the muscular guy got up with a stone in his hand, but I was able to hold his friend, and I used him as a shield." The bodyguard then threw the blond man down an embankment and tumbled after him.

The muscular Israeli, he said, could have escaped but did not. By this time, from the gathering crowd, a man emerged and said he was a security officer. Together, the two Jordanians bundled the battered Israelis into a taxi and took them to the police station at Wadi Seir.

When a Canadian consular officer arrived some time later, his ostensible countrymen refused offers to provide a lawyer, a doctor or information to their families in Canada. Misha'l, meanwhile, soon found he could not stand upright. "Two hours after the attack, he started with acute vertigo and severe vomiting, and he was taken to Islamic Hospital," said Isahq Maraga, a neurologist and friend of Misha'l's who visited his bedside.

"While there, he started to have difficulty breathing. On His Majesty's orders, he was

moved to King Hussein Medical Center, and there his respiration failed." By the following morning, a Friday, said fellow Hamas politburo member Moussa Abu Marzook, Misha'l had a fever of 102 degrees that did not respond to treatment. "He was unconscious and breathing on a respirator, and there was no hope," Abu Marzook said.

"The doctors analyzed everything, and they couldn't find what was the problem," Jordanian intelligence by this time knew or surmised that Misha'l had been felled by some sort of chemical attack. In the first frantic flurry of phone calls—there were dozens, officials said, at every level of both governments—King Hussein drew a line. If Misha'l died, he told Netanyahu, according to a briefing given to the semi-official newspaper Al Rai, Israel's agents would be tried in public and hanged, and anything could happen in relations between the two states.

If the case was not treated and death was the result of this attack, Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali said in an interview this week, "certainly things would have developed in a very nasty way." By the end of the day on Friday, the antidote was handed over, apparently on orders from Netanyahu. On Saturday, according to officials from both governments, King Hussein telephoned President Clinton to plead for further help in treating the poison and managing the crisis.

By Sunday, a top-ranking delegation of Israelis was in Amman, including Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, Naveh and security officials David Ivri and Efraim Halevy. Israel wanted its agents back. King Hussein, refusing to meet Netanyahu, told them through Crown Prince Hassan that his price would begin with Yassin's release—to placate Jordan's Islamic opposition. Prince Hassan flew Monday to Washington with a briefcase full of evidence implicating Israel. There, he briefed Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, pleading for help to turn Israeli relations from what the King regards as their present disastrous course. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Israel goes on defensive in botched-attack controversy

By Rebecca Trueman

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM**—The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, swept up in a growing political storm over a bungled assassination attempt, broke its official silence on the affair Sunday by defending Israel's right to fight terrorism "without compromise."

But the government stopped short of officially admitting what various aides have said privately: that Israeli Mossad agents carried out the 25 September attack on Khaled Misha'l, a leader of the militant Islamic movement Hamas in Jordan capital.

The botched attack—widely viewed here as the worst in the history of Israel's vaunted intelligence services—has plunged the Netanyahu government into a domestic political crisis, damaged relations with Jordan, and overshadowed the latest US-led effort to revive peace talks with the Palestinians.

The attack dominated Israeli newspapers and radio talk shows, which carried almost uniformly critical accounts of its planning and execution. Several commentators and opposition lawmakers called on Netanyahu and Mossad director Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom to resign.

More fallout increased as Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, whose release last week from an Israeli prison has been linked to the affair, returned from Jordan to the Gaza Strip.

The same Yassin was flown from Amman to Gaza City for a "welcome" that drew thousands.

In its first official comment on the Misha'l scandal, the government did not directly address reports of Israel's involvement. But in a brief statement released after the weekly Cabinet meeting, it appeared to try to justify the attack, describing Misha'l as the "No. 1 figure in Hamas" and accusing him of responsibility for the deaths of Israeli civilians.

An Israeli government official speaking on condition of anonymity said the Mossad was ordered to assassinate Misha'l because the Hamas leader had personally authorized two suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and August, September that killed 26 people, including the five bombers, and injured hundreds of others. "He was a natural target," the official said.

In the mid-morning incident in Amman, two men carrying Canadian passports approached Misha'l outside his office, held a strange weapon up to his ear and sprayed or injected him with a poison chemical. He was hospitalized

but recovered with the help of an antidote, reportedly provided by Israel on the insistence of His Majesty King Hussein.

Canada, outraged over the use of forged or altered Canadian passports in the attack, has recalled its ambassador from Israel for consultations.

The attack also infuriated King Hussein and brought Israel-Jordanian relations already strained by differences over the peace process with the Palestinians to the brink of collapse. In an interview published Sunday, King Hussein, whose nation signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, called the attack a "reckless act carried out by a party that has no faith in peace."

The king did not specifically link Israel to the assassination attempt but called on the Israeli government to honor its peace agreement with Jordan. He also criticized Netanyahu's "personality unable to reach a conclusion as to how the Israeli prime minister thinks," Hussein said in the interview with the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper. "This makes me very worried."

But in a move analysts interpreted as a sign of Israeli resolve, the two countries agreed to turn over a joint press conference to King Hussein last Sunday evening. The two

dentials of Israel's new ambassador to Jordan, Oded Eran. The ceremony was scheduled before the attack, officials said.

Also Sunday, an Israeli official denied a report in London's Sunday Times that Netanyahu, outraged by Hamas' suicide bombings in Jerusalem, had dismissed Yatom's misgivings about carrying out the attack in Jordan and ordered the Mossad chief to proceed.

"That's the exact opposite of what happened," the government official said. "It was Mossad's plan which was brought to the prime minister and then approved."

Opposition lawmakers called for an official inquiry and commentators offered withering criticism of Netanyahu.

"It is inconceivable that a failure of such magnitude and such strategic blindness be allowed to pass without those responsible resigning or being fired," the respected military commentator said.

Ze'ev Schiff wrote in Sunday's Haaretz daily. "In well-ordered countries, prime ministers and cabinet ministers resign over such things, not just the public figures Schiff wrote. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## latest ICRC issue shows horrors of landmines

By Anca de Maio  
Special to The Star

THE MAGAZINE of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (since 1987, *Red Cross, Red Crescent*) is an official publication produced jointly by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation), with contributions from the National Societies.

Published three times a year in English, French and Spanish, the magazine is distributed in over 175 countries. "It has a print run of approximately 56,000, but we believe that it is read by many more than that as one copy is usually shared by several people," Ms. Christina Grisewood, the ICRC co-editor of the magazine told *The Star*.

Beside the informative function it has within the Movement itself, *Red Cross, Red Crescent* aims to outreach the key people who are involved in the work of the ICRC, the Federation and National Societies as well as a wider audience (supportive institutions, mass media, public libraries and schools), by promoting the image and reflecting the unity of the Movement.

"In addition to the ICRC and the Federation," Ms. Grisewood said, "the magazine provides a forum in which crucial issues can be de-

continued, "are not necessarily those of the Movement."

Substantially redesigned in 1994, the magazine excels in both conceptual coherence and illustrative material. To this effect, the *Red Cross, Red Crescent* current issue is the perfect example.

In the present context of the irreversible progress made towards an international ban against anti-personal (AP) landmines, two cover stories are dedicated to the campaigns against landmines driven by the *Red Cross* and *Red Crescent Movement*, by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), certain governments and international agencies.

"As the issue of landmines has been discussed in numerous well-documented articles, we tried to explore a new angle and focused on the public campaign for a global ban on landmines and not on the landmines issue as such," Ms. Grisewood pointed out.

In the main story headed "Taking action: the war on landmines," Mary-Anne Andersen from the ICRC's Mines Unit, describes the subjective and objective conditions that made possible their public campaign and shows that the revolutionary use of advertising has been a key strategy in communicating with worldwide audience. She insists on the campaign as a powerful Movement exercise, in which the ICRC's international effort was multiplied at the national level by that of National Societies. Having gained

important political support, the campaign is on the brink of success. (In the meantime, the Oslo Diplomatic Conference adopted on 18 September a treaty prohibiting the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of AP mines). Yet a global ban cannot solve the remaining problem of the "deadly heritage of mines," demonstrates the writer. For this reason, the ICRC is still concerned with mine victim long-term assistance. Keeping in mind that every month 800 people are killed and 1,200 maimed by AP landmines and that over 100 million active mines are scattered in more than 70 countries—for every 16 children or 48 human beings on the planet, "a total ban on AP mines will only be the beginning of the end," she concludes.

Journalist Philip C. Winslow signs an article in which he discloses the circumstances in which he realized that landmines have "respected neither civilian status nor the end of a conflict" for 130 years now. He evokes the field experiences and concerted activities of the worldwide network of NGOs known as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (a campaign parallel to that of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement). The author also discusses the reluctance of certain governments to sign on to a total ban and debates over the "limited military utility" of this cheap but terrifying weapon.

On the next page freelance journalist bar-

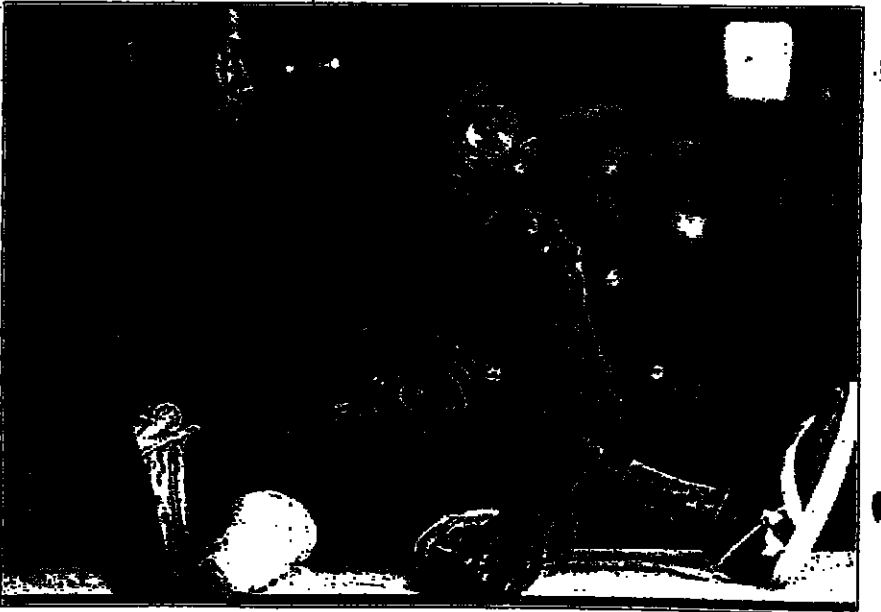
Omar Valdimarsson evokes the devastating earthquake that hit the Indian province of Maharashtra in September 1993 and shows the results of the massive reconstruction program implemented there by the Federation and the Indian Red Cross.

"The waiting game" is the title of a series of photos and commentaries by the French journalist and photographer Anne Noesen illustrating the hardships of everyday life in the Gaza Strip: poverty and unemployment.

"The Palestinian Red Crescent Society can now claim to have laid the foundations to becoming a united and well-functioning National Society," writes Christina Grisewood in a story on the progress made by PRCS since 1995 with the help of the Federation and the ICRC, despite the crisis of the peace process and its social and economic consequences. (As a conclusion of its intervention in the clashes of September 1996, the ICRC and the German Red Cross supported the PRCS to improve the efficiency of its Emergency Medical Department and to make further adjustments in equipment and procedures, she maintains.)

The critical effects of the delays in the implementation of the oil-for-food agreement on the already deteriorated life standard of the Iraqi people constitute the issue analyzed by freelance Christine Aziz.

She anticipates that "donors will lose interest in Iraq," while needs are still acute. Federation delegate Abbas Gullet recalls



the "once-in-a-lifetime experience" he lived in Tanzania in November 1996, when he found himself in the midst of the exodus of Rwandan refugees from their camps in Tanzania, as they feared repatriation. ("Our team at the way-stations and water points had to work 24 hours a day for about 14 days over a stretch of nearly 100 km," he narrates.)

The Bulletin Board of the magazine offers a number of small "funny" items of interest to the Movement. Kenyan artist displays metal sculpture exhibition in support of the global campaign to ban landmines, record-breaking landmine amputee runs for the cause of landmine victims, Princess Diana in Angola endorses the campaign against mines, etc.

The Resources pages of this number presents the latest publications, audio-visual material and electronic media pro-

duced on landmines and other subjects concerning the Movement.

On the last but one page, a number of letters from the readers are published, commenting on topics already tackled in other *Red Cross, Red Crescent* issues or making suggestions for the coming numbers.

The magazine ends with a Questions & Answers page, where the leader of Hong Kong Red Cross is asked about the new opportunities of this society as a integrated branch of the Red Cross Society of China, after the 1 July historic transition.

Maximizing the communication between *Red Cross, Red Crescent* and its public, powerful illustrating materials accompany the texts and graphic design highlight the layout and graphic design highlight the logical structure of the stories and the conceptual scaffolding of the publication. ■



Representative of the Taiwan Commercial Office in Amman

# 'What the whole world emphasizes today is peace, development and cooperation'

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mr. Francis T.N. Chang is the new Representative of the Taiwan Commercial Office in Amman. Mr. Chang has started his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan in 1971. Since then he served first in Saudi Arabia, then Bahrain and now in Jordan. The Star talked to Mr. Chang about Jordan-Taiwan relations, his country's commercial ties with the era and his hopes for the future. Excerpts follow:

**How do you characterize Jordan-Taiwan relations at the present time?**

I am very happy to say that the friendly relations between Jordan and Taiwan could be traced back to the early stage of the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and be highlighted by the historical meeting between HM King Hussein and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, my late president, in 1959 in Taiwan, which established the sound foundation of the traditional lasting friendship and continuously maintained and strengthened by the two peoples under the leadership respectively by HRH Crown Prince Hassan and the former President Chiang Ching-kuo and the current President Lee Teng-hui.

At the present time, this tra-

ditional friendship between the two countries could be characterized as brotherly one in which we could share the happy experience and consider the difficulties of the other if any, in frank and candid mood. We the government and people Taiwan do cherish this traditional friendship.

**As the new Representative to the Taiwan office, what do you hope to achieve during your tenure?**

It is a great honor for me to be assigned by my government as a new representative here for the purpose of strengthening the existing friendship between our two governments and peoples.

During my tenure, I want to cooperate with the Jordanian friends to make the exchange of visits between the two peoples be strengthened in order to enhance the mutual understanding. The two countries' economic and trade ties must be further strengthened for the benefit of the two peoples. And also want to see the cooperation projects in various fields be continuously increased and smoothly carried out for the mutual benefits.

**In terms of economic relations, how does your country view the Middle East region?**

The Middle East has always been one of the important trad-



Chang

ing partners for us. In 1996, the two way trade reached \$2172.6 million between the Middle Eastern countries and Taiwan while we exported \$1,159.8 million to the region and imported \$1,012.8 million from Middle East, including export of \$58.3 million to Jordan and import \$21.5 million from Jordan. The Middle East

is also a major source for us to import the natural raw materials such as crude oil, natural gas and phosphate which are vital to our industrial development. So we attach great importance to this region.

Taiwan has been making great economic strides, this is especially so in computers

and electronics. How do you see your country's role as you go into the 21st century?

Taiwan was still a near bankrupt agricultural economy when my government relocated its seat in Taipei in 1949. It started with groundbreaking agricultural reforms to steady investment of agricultural export earning in acquiring raw materials for its incipient industrial infrastructure. Its industrial development spurred by the vigorous governmental promotion of strategic, technology-intensive industries such as electronics, information industry, precision machinery, industrial automation, and semiconductor in the eighties.

Up to 1996, my country has significantly developed its economy to the extent that it enjoys a per capita income of more than \$412,000 with foreign reserve around \$90 billion, the third highest in the world, its foreign trade totaling \$217 billion which makes Taiwan the 15th world's highest trading nation, and also the 13th biggest outbound investors in the world.

Indeed in recent years, the computer-related information industry and electronic industry have played an important role in our economic development. Last year the total value of information industry totalled \$29.66 billion that makes it the third biggest in the world, just after the US and Japan. Furthermore, Taiwan's products of monitors, CPUs, personal computers, power supply units, desktop monitors, key boards, sound busters, mouse units, palm-sized scanners, VGA cards occupy the first position in the world market. With the fast development in the computer network and the software industry, Taiwan has laid a solid foundation for the coming world's competitive information industry.

In 1994 we launched an ambitious plan to develop an Asia-Pacific Operation Center (APROC) over the next 10 years, in an effort to play a key role in the region's economic integration in the 21st

century. On the business level, Taiwan can then serve as a stepping stone for local and multinational businesses to invest in and develop Asia-Pacific markets. On the macro-economic level, it can become a strong base for developing all kinds of trade and economic relations with Asia-Pacific nations, making it a center of business activities, such as manufacturing, trans-shipment, finance, telecommunications, and media operations.

The ultimate goal is to make Taiwan a science and technology island in this region.

**How do you see Taiwan's relationship to the Far East region and to China in particular?**

We are entering the new era of the 21st century. What the whole world emphasizes today is peace, development and cooperation. The cold war, hot

war and confrontation should be thrown into the trash-can of history. There is no country that does not desire regional, global peace and prosperity.

Taiwan, being a member of the Far East Region whose prosperity and development definitely rest on its stability, will spare no effort in cooperation with its neighbors in fostering the stable harmonious situation in this region, so that the region could enjoy the fruits of prosperity and peace. Disregard the lack of official diplomatic ties with the neighboring countries, Taiwan maintains stable substantial relationships with them.

Regrettably, the relation between the two Chinas across the Taiwan Straits, remains non-progressive.

We want peace. We want any difference be solved by peaceful means.

Taiwan today has developed into a full-fledged democratic state. Yet as a result of the

tragic civil war, the Chinese nation was politically divided following the October 1, 1949 establishment of the PRC government on the Chinese mainland.

In recent years, our side has come to acknowledge the reality of China's political division and has sought to engage in peaceful exchange and negotiations with the PRC side in an effort to build mutual trust and understanding that will be absolutely necessary for the fostering of stable and constructive relations.

We are sincerely hoping that through peaceful exchanges in various fields such as trade, visits, culture etc., mutual understanding and confidence could be reached and hopefully could lead to the eventual re-unification in the future under the principles of freedom, democracy and prosperity. ■



● Taiwan is the birthplace of the Evergreen Group. The island's comforting warmth is reflected in the Group's services. Evergreen is the parent company of Eva Air which has become a valued asset, complementing its parent group's long established worldwide sea and land trans network with significant air routes

## Seeking to join international organizations and contribute more to the world community

A NEW concept has appeared in the international community over the past 20 years, called "International interdependence." It means that the world is like a big family, and every country exists within this family. No nation can live completely independent of the others, nor can it disregard the interests and existence of other countries.

This is the way it should be in human society. It is when every nation realizes the true meaning of interdependence that it will tend to work out differences through negotiations or agreements that are in the interests of all, rather than resorting to fighting, which merely dissipates each other's strength.

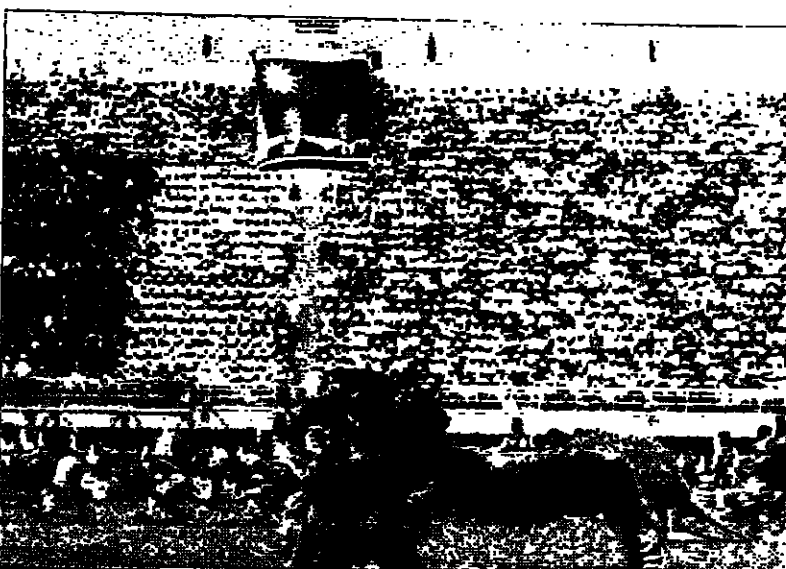
A parallel development with the concept of interdependence is the establishment of mainstream values. The two major values, free-market economics and democracy, have emerged since the Industrial revolution, becoming highly influential major concepts in international affairs. Of course, they have been challenged by other political philosophies in the meantime, such as imperialism, Nazism and communism. However, at the end of the 20th century, these once formidable challenges have been assigned to the "dustbin of history," while free-market economics and democracy have indisputably become mainstream international values.

When Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China, was campaigning to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty some 80 years ago, he vowed to found a republic based on what he called the three Principles of the People, i.e., nationalism, Democracy, and the people's livelihood. These principles, in essence, conform with free-market economics and democracy.

Eighty-six years later, the amount of territory under the direct jurisdiction of the Taiwan government is far less than after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. However, the spirit in which it was founded carried on Dr. Sun's philosophy. What is different is that Dr. Sun's philosophy has become fact in Taiwan. Decades of effort by Taiwan have created remarkable

achievements. Taiwan is not accorded an even vaguely commensurate status or treatment by the international community. It has been expelled from the United Nations and nearly all inter-governmental organizations. Taiwan's application to join the World Trade Organization cannot be acted upon until after that of the Chinese mainland. It does not share formal diplomatic relations with most countries.

Taiwan's government is not after independence; what it seeks is a China reunified with liberty, democracy and prosperity. However, this issue can no way be solved by accepting the mainland's demands. To do



so would be to destabilize Asia and the rest of the world. Taiwan hopes to use peaceful exchange to make the leaders of Peking understand that the Taiwan experience is the best way to solve the problem of reunifying Taiwan and the mainland. However, of course, this will take time. Until that day arrives, Taiwan must take part in the global community and heighten its international presence. Otherwise, the disappearance of a country like Taiwan, that subscribes to mainstream nations of free-market economics and democracy would constitute a significant loss to the international community.

Conversely, if Taiwan has the opportunity to play a more constructive role in the interna-

tional community, in the short term it could directly contribute to the world what Taiwan has gained from its political and economic advancements. In the long term, should the mainland make progress and modernize as a result of peaceful exchanges with Taiwan, and become a responsible member of the international community, this would be Taiwan's greatest contribution to the world.

Interdependence has become an increasingly important principle in the global community. Since the state of cross-strait relations directly affects the whole world, it is hoped the international community can be open-minded and listen to what Taiwan has to say. ■

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# The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV  
from 11 - 17 October

## Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *The Fifth Element*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *The Nutty Professor*
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Caption Ron*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *Four Weddings & Funeral*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Monkey Trouble*
- Galleria I (Tel: 634149): *Men in Black*
- Galleria II (Tel: 634149): *My Best Friend's Wedding*

## Movies & Videos



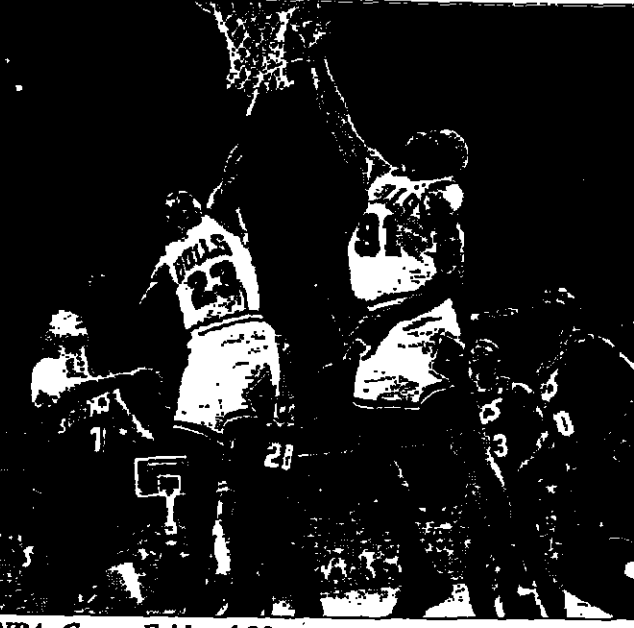
### Masterminds

Ozzie Paxton (Vincent Kartheiser) is a 14 year old who's rebellious behavior had him expelled by Claire Maloney (Brenda Ficker), principal to the upscale suburban Shady Glen School. After taking his sister to class one day, Oz sneaks into the basement to set up one security consultant Raif Bentley (Patrick Stewart) has taken the entire student body hostage...

The Film directed by Roger Christian.

### ENGLISH PROGRAMS

- #### SATURDAY
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Twinkle
  - 2:30—Muppet Show
  - 3:00—World of Geo
  - 4:00—The Vally Between
  - 4:30—Beakmans World
  - 5:00—French Programs
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Neighbors
  - 8:00—Newly Weds
  - 8:30—Prism
  - 9:10—Time Trax
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:30—Feature Film
  - 12:00—Allen
- #### SUNDAY
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—Little Rosey
  - 2:30—Jonny Quest
  - 3:00—Energy Express
  - 3:40—Lucky Lucky
  - 4:00—American Chart Show
  - 4:30—Tarazan
  - 6:00—French Programs
  - 7:00—News in French
  - 7:30—News Headlines
  - 7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
  - 8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
  - 8:30—Struggle for Democracy
  - 9:10—Renegade
  - 10:00—News at Ten
  - 10:30—One West Walkid
  - 11:15—The Bourne Identity
  - 12:00—Sisters
- #### MONDAY
- 2:00—Holy Koran
  - 2:10—The Show With The Mouse
  - 2:30—Cowboy of the Moomesa
  - 3:00—Gillette Sports Special
  - 3:30—Riding High
  - 4:00—Animal Show
  - 4:30—Ocean Girl



NBA Game, Friday 4:30 pm

#### TUESDAY

- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:10—Sandocan
- 2:30—C.R.O.
- 3:00—Slippy
- 3:30—The Album Show
- 4:30—Square One T.V
- 5:15—French Programs
- 7:00—News in French
- 7:30—News Headlines
- 7:35—Sara
- 8:00—Till
- 8:30—Encounter

#### WEDNESDAY

- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:10—Jonny Quest
- 2:30—Super Daue
- 3:00—Secrets of Treasure Island
- 3:30—Spell Binder
- 4:00—Monsters Today
- 4:30—Border Town
- 6:00—French Programs
- 7:00—News in French
- 7:30—News Headlines
- 7:35—Neighbors
- 8:00—Grace under Fire
- 8:30—Challenges
- 9:10—Kung-Fu
- 10:00—News at Ten
- 10:25—Land's End
- 11:00—American Gothic

#### THURSDAY

- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:10—New Kids on the Block
- 2:30—My Little Fairy Tale
- 3:00—America's Funniest People
- 3:30—He Shoot He Scores
- 4:00—I Love Lucy
- 4:30—The Boy from Andromeda
- 5:00—French Programs
- 7:00—News in French
- 7:30—News Headlines
- 7:35—Trivial Pursuit
- 8:00—Parenthood
- 8:30—Jois and clark (Superman)
- 9:10—Winfrey Show
- 10:00—News at Ten
- 10:30—Feature Film
- 12:00—Step By Step

#### FRIDAY

- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:10—Leo The Lion
- 2:30—Fred And Barney
- 3:00—Wish Bone
- 3:30—Lucky Luke
- 4:00—Family Matters
- 4:30—NBA
- 5:00—News in French
- 7:30—News Headlines
- 7:35—Neighbors
- 8:00—The Health Show
- 8:30—Adventures of Brisco County
- 9:10—Sea Power
- 10:00—News at Ten
- 10:30—Best Seller
- 11:15—Feature Film

#### PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

#### SAMEDI

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Cyber-vision

#### DIMANCHE

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Magazine
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Magazine pour tous Ziva

#### LUNDI

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Thalassa
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

#### MARDI

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Savoir plus santé
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Orient sur Seine

#### MERCREDI

- 5:00—Secrets de famille
- 5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
- 6:00—Ushuaia
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—E = M6

#### JEUDI

- 5:00—La France aux mille visages
- 5:30—Fort Boyard
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Le dessous des cartes

#### VENREDI

- 5:30—Paris minuit
- 7:00—Le journal
- 7:15—Magazine

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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- #### ACROSS
- 1 Phonograph record
  - 5 Hamburger, e.g.
  - 10 Circuits
  - 14 Vicinity
  - 15 See eye to eye
  - 16 Dies
  - 17 Use the phone
  - 18 Lion cries
  - 19 Mona
  - 20 Italian wine center
  - 21 Actress Moran
  - 22 Monumental gateway
  - 23 Conclusive
  - 25 Worker's gp
  - 26 Classify
  - 29 Antiseptic compound
  - 34 Metric unit
  - 35 Begudge
  - 36 Singing group
  - 37 Ripped
- #### DOWN
- 1 Infant's word
  - 2 Fleur-de-lis
  - 3 Stock exchange membership
  - 4 Orange-yellow flower
  - 5 Ma or pa
  - 6 Greek meeting place
  - 7 Low-growing plant
  - 8 Sea bird
  - 9 Affirmative
  - 10 Bell-shaped flower
  - 11 Seed coat
  - 12 El—Texas
  - 13 Actor Connery
  - 22 Arab gp.
  - 24 Wrath
  - 25 Poem of rustic life: var.
  - 26 "Is Born"
  - 27 Fur piece
  - 28 Mass of ice
  - 30 Baking place
  - 31 Speak pompously
  - 32 The life of—
  - 33 Anchors
  - 35 Slacken the strain
  - 38 —out (extricate from trouble)
  - 42 Comic DeLuise
  - 44 Angry
  - 45 Hoisting devices
  - 49 Join
  - 49 WWII site
  - 50 Baby's bed
  - 51 Go up
  - 52 Mexican favorite
  - 54 Labyrinth
  - 55 Writer Ephron
  - 56 Gravel ridges
  - 58 Uncle

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: There won't be much time to ponder. You'll have to know what you're doing to keep up with the crowd. Save major decisions. Intellectual endeavors, such as writing, are favored.

**Aries (March 21-April 19).** Finish the overdue item. Be nice, or you'll lose a game you didn't know you were playing. Get some of your groovy concepts down in writing, or you won't impress your superiors.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20).** Rescue a friend who's stressing. Don't get into the story, just provide reassurance. The workload's too heavy, and somebody's yelling at you to get it done. Not good working conditions. Tough it out, and you'll get what you want.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21).** Don't be late to work again. The boss knows when you're not there. If you and your friends share expenses, a trip is doable. Don't get in between quarreling lovers. They will make up, with or without your advice.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22).** A conversation with a wise foreigner is soothing. Watch out for a feisty person. Stay out of his/her way. Don't get your feelings hurt by a snotty administrator. S/he is just in a rotten mood.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 22).** Money's tight. Take your date for a walk around the neighborhood instead. A grouchy, older person demands time and attention. Be careful.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** A partner's financial problems affect you. Shuffle the funds so that there's enough. If you have trouble paying back a loan, negotiate a new deal.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Pay attention to ace the assignment. Also be creative. An obnoxious loudmouth could get in your face. Be kind and considerate, of course. That's your best weapon.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Make plenty of time for love. Your sweetheart is in a compliant mood, but don't ask for a commitment. The workload is intense.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Don't run off. A friend needs attention. If you live alone, water the plants and clean the fishbowl.

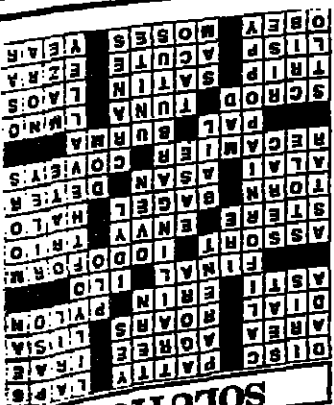
**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Pay extra attention to supervisors and make lots of points. Split time between work and home. Discuss your plans for the future.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Expenses put a dent in your budget. Get what you need second-hand to save. Turn down an invitation. You can't afford to go.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20).** Money's coming and going at an alarming rate. Don't spend it all in one place. A friend settles you down, much to your delight.

If you're Having a Birthday This Week: Focus on others. Learn to listen. Start with a partnership and end up with a happy crowd. Get help with a rocky relationship, to honeymoon in June.

## School's out? What now?



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# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

## Nouvelles du Pays

Conditions de travail

### Les 35 heures, c'est pour demain...

C'est en effet demain que débute la conférence sur l'emploi et les salaires. Si le gouvernement et les partenaires sociaux parviennent à s'entendre, les Français ne devraient plus travailler que 35 heures par semaine au lieu de 39 heures.



Manifestation intersyndicale à Lyon déjà en 1996 pour les... 32 heures !

Depuis l'instauration des congés payés en 1936 et des 40 heures par semaine, jamais la réduction de la durée du travail n'aura été si brutale.

Avec les années-chômage, la réduction du temps de travail - la RTT - apparaît comme un instrument de partage du travail qui repose sur une simple règle de trois : je réduis la durée du travail, j'embauche des chômeurs pour compenser cette baisse. L'état économise les dépenses dues au chômage, et peut aider financièrement les entreprises en réduisant, par exemple, le taux des cotisations sociales.

En juin 1996, la loi de Robien permettait déjà aux entreprises de bénéficier de 30 à 40% d'exonération de charges sociales, pendant 7 ans, si elles réduisaient la durée du travail

de 10% et augmentaient leurs effectifs de 10%. Cette loi a permis de créer des emplois ou d'éviter des licenciements.

Mais l'économie fonctionnelle selon les lois de l'arithmétique ? Ainsi un salarié qui travaille moins longtemps est plus cher et souvent plus productif. Il n'est donc pas forcément nécessaire d'embaucher autant que l'indique un calcul primaire. D'autre part la RTT suppose que les salariés puissent se substituer les uns aux autres, il faut donc de la flexibilité et de la polyvalence dans les équipes. Pour Charles Wyplosz, professeur à l'École des hautes études internationales de Genève « si on décide les 35 heures payées 39, les entreprises vont accélérer l'automatisation et si on fait

35 heures payées 35, on partage le chômage ». Pour le CNPF (Conseil National du Patronat Français), un passage obligé et généralisé aux 35 heures avec maintien du salaire ferait nécessairement perdre de la compétitivité aux entreprises. Résultat : la cherté augmenterait illico. Pas question non plus, pour l'instant de négocier des baisses de salaires en échange de ces 35 heures pour tous : « très difficile à obtenir sur le terrain », selon les patrons. Autre argument contre : faut-il travailler moins quand les concurrents internationaux travaillent plus ?

Et les Français seraient-ils heureux de travailler moins ? Tout dépend évidemment des conditions qui leur sont proposées. Une enquête réalisée en 1995 par l'INSEE montre que les trois quarts des salariés à temps complet refuseraient la RTT s'ils y perdaient du pouvoir d'achat, les plus réticents étant les jeunes de moins de 24 ans. Ils l'accepteraient plus volontiers s'ils étaient sûrs qu'elle crée des emplois.

Dernière question : les cadres, qui ont la réputation de finir tard le soir et d'emporter 20 kilos de dossiers sous les bras pour le week-end, pourraient-ils bénéficier de la RTT ? Si on en croit Xavier Leflaive, consultant, la réponse est oui. Suite à un accord d'entreprise il a accepté d'échanger 7% de son salaire contre 44 jours de congés supplémentaires par an. « Bien sûr il faut apprendre à rayer des jours dans son agenda et à s'y conformer », mais la RTT « c'est l'occasion de redécouvrir le cinéma, la lecture, et de faire de la recherche en sociologie ».

Avec le concours de la presse magazine française

### Pas plus de 48 heures par semaine en Jordanie

Le code du travail, écrit une première fois en 1960, a été réorganisé l'année dernière. La loi limite ainsi le nombre d'heures légales de travail à 8 heures par jour et 48 heures par semaine. Les heures supplémentaires doivent être payées 125% plus chères.

L'employé a un jour minimum de repos par semaine, qui n'est pas forcément le vendredi. Au total, il a droit à 14 jours de congés payés par an, 21 jours après cinq ans d'ancienneté.

Le nouveau code de travail compte au total 150 pages qui donnent le cadre des conditions de travail en Jordanie et déterminent les droits et les devoirs de chacun. Malgré cela, les relations patrons-employés demeurent très peu réglementées. Ainsi le contrat de travail, qui établit noir sur blanc ce qui s'impose à chacune des parties, n'est pas obligatoire. Liberté est donc laissée à l'employeur de changer les conditions de travail de son

ouvrier selon son bon vouloir.

Le salaire également échappe à la protection de la loi. Il est fixé librement par l'employeur. Dans ces conditions, le Smic (salaire minimum) à la française est ici une fiction ou un doux paradis.

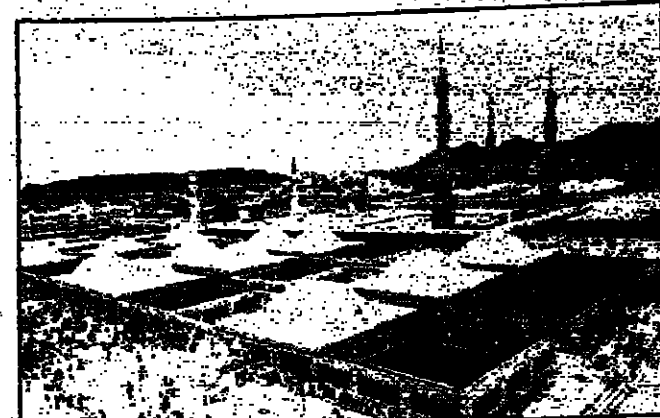
De plus, les moyens dont dispose l'Etat pour faire appliquer les quelques règles édictées sont très limités. Le Jordanie ne compte en effet que 196 inspecteurs du travail, plus occupés aujourd'hui à faire la chasse aux clandestins qu'à aux mille petites infractions à la législation, selon Hamad Abu Nijmeh, conseiller juridique au ministère du travail.

Il existe des tribunaux pour punir les patrons « esclavagistes », mais « les gens ne font pas confiance à la loi », confie M. Abu Nijmeh. Avant de corriger, souvent, ils ne savent combien les tribunaux peuvent les défendre.

Y.L.

### Un mauvais rapport pour la justice saoudienne

« L'organisation Human Rights Watch-Middle East a vivement critiqué les « carences graves » du système judiciaire en Arabie saoudite et a dénoncé l'exécution pour « sorcellerie » d'un Syrien, ancien employé d'un neveu du roi Fahd. « Le système judiciaire en Arabie saoudite ne peut fournir des garanties pour un procès équitable, et le pouvoir judiciaire permet à la famille royale et aux personnes haut placées de manipuler le système à leur avantage », est-il expliqué dans un rapport de Human Rights Watch. « La pratique de la détention préventive appliquée en Arabie et celle des aveux sans preuve ni confirmation ont favorisé l'usage de la contrainte et des tortures pour obtenir une incrimination », ajoute le rapport de 29 pages. L'organisation souligne le cas d'un Syrien condamné à mort pour « sorcellerie ». Dans son procès, aucun témoin à décharge n'a été entendu, en dépit d'une liste de plus de 20 personnes dressée par l'accusé et qui auraient pu témoigner de son innocence, poursuit-on dans le document. « L'absence d'un code pénal écrit ou publié (...) permet aux autorités de décider à leur guise de l'ampleur et de la nature des crimes et des sentences », affirme encore Human Rights Watch. Plus de 540 exécutions ont eu lieu en Arabie saoudite depuis 1990, dont plus de 100 depuis le début de l'année, selon les chiffres de l'organisation.



Le système judiciaire saoudien est basé sur la Charia, la loi islamique.

Hamas-Israël-Jordanie

## Hussein, nouveau roi de la diplomatie

De l'habileté et de l'ambiguïté de la diplomatie jordaniennne : le roi Hussein est sorti premier prix de danse des deux dernières semaines de valse diplomatique. Le souverain hachémite a su avec maestria ménager la chèvre et le chou.

Les résultats diplomatiques obtenus par le roi Hussein en ont satisfait plus d'un :

1. Le Hamas est ravi : deux leaders de poids, soignés en même temps dans le même hôpital d'Amman, ont aujourd'hui retrouvé tous leurs moyens. D'autre part, avec le costume-cravate de Mesh'al et le fauteuil roulant du vieil homme Cheikh Yassine, on est loin de la folie dévastatrice des « Human bombs ». Pour la première fois peut-être, c'est la branche politique du mouvement intégriste palestinien et non ses bataillons de volontaires pour la mort qui ont fait la une des journaux et des télévisions du monde entier.

2. Les islamistes applaudissent : les Frères Musulmans de Jordanie ont envoyé une lettre de remerciements au roi, qui du coup retrouve une place d'honneur auprès des partisans du mouvement islamiste. Toutefois, ils ont refusé de revenir sur leur boycott des prochaines élections législatives et accusent encore le gouvernement de ne pas accepter le dialogue.

3. Les Palestiniens sont aux anges (sauf peut-être Arafat qui doit faire face à un regain de crédibilité du Hamas) : ils viennent de retrouver un guide spirituel, enfermé depuis huit ans par Israël et des prisonniers ont été libérés.

Pour traiter avec Israël, le souverain hachémite a choisi par ailleurs l'ambiguïté et le double discours.

1. Pas question de se brouiller avec le pays de Netanyahu. Dans ce jeu délicat, le gouvernement jordanien, notamment son ministre de l'information, chargé de jouer les rabat-joie et la discrétion, a refusé jusqu'au bout l'hypothèse-Mossad dans l'attentat contre Mecha'al, celle d'un marché entre les deux pays rivaux du Jourdain. A cet égard, le gouvernement a adopté des précautions de langage dont il ne s'était pas embarrassé après l'attaque contre les deux diplomates israéliens (voir ci-contre).

2. Pas question non plus de laisser Israël mettre en péril la sécurité du royaume en toute impunité. Au roi Hussein donc, les négociations et les pressions en coulisses sur Benjamin Netanyahu pour récoller in fine les fruits de la boulette israélienne.

Au total, le gouvernement hachémite risque d'avoir perdu un peu plus encore la confiance des Jordaniens. En revanche, le roi Hussein, plus charismatique que jamais sur la scène internationale, peut apparaître comme un double leader : celui de la cause palestinienne et surtout celui de la paix, pour laquelle Arafat et Netanyahu se sont retrouvés hier pour la première fois depuis 8 mois.

Yannick Lainé



Il peut lever les bras au ciel. Avec l'affaire Mecha'al, le roi Hussein est un leader politique qui compte plus que jamais.

### Affaire Mecha'al : les pincettes du gouvernement

A coups de déclarations et de communiqués, le gouvernement jordanien s'est avancé à tâtons dans l'affaire Mecha'al. Retour sur 15 jours de prudence.

22 septembre : Tentative d'assassinat contre deux employés de l'ambassade israélienne à Amman. Dans un communiqué, publié le jour même, le gouvernement « dénonce fermement l'attentat perpétré contre deux employés de l'ambassade d'Israël et s'engage à poursuivre tout auteur ou instigateur de ce crime ».

Le soir, à la télévision, il promet une forte récompense pour toute information permettant la capture des assassins. De son côté, le roi Hussein se rend immédiatement au chevet des deux blessés au Centre médical et qualifie l'attentat de « navrant et de dégradant ».

25 septembre : Le chef du bureau politique du Hamas, Khaled Mecha'al, est conduit d'urgence au Centre médical Al-Husseini après avoir été victime d'une attaque. Deux « touristes canadiens » sont arrêtés sur les lieux par la police jordanienne. Le ministre de l'information Samir Mutawi écarte l'hypothèse d'une « tentative d'assassinat » et ajoute : « Tout ce qui s'est passé n'était qu'une querelle entre le chauffeur de Mecha'al et deux touristes canadiens qui faisaient leurs courses à Tla'a Al-Ahli ».

Dans le même temps, le Hamas publie un communiqué dans lequel il accuse clairement les services secrets israéliens d'avoir attenté à la vie de leur leader politique.

27 septembre : Le ministre de l'information revient sur ses déclarations et confirme que Mecha'al a bien été « attaqué » mais sans mettre en cause le Mossad.

28 septembre : Le roi Hussein déclare dans une conférence de presse que le mini-

stre de l'information n'avait pas l'intention de tromper l'opinion publique. Le gouvernement parle toujours de « deux touristes canadiens ».

30 septembre : Le ministre de l'information Samir Mutawi qualifie les accusations apparues dans la presse locale selon laquelle le Mossad serait derrière l'attentat contre Khaled Mecha'al de « rumeurs ». « Amman est une ville abondante de rumeurs et de spéculations ».

1er octobre : Libération du guide spirituel du Hamas Cheikh Yassine par Israël quelques heures après l'appel lancé par le roi Hussein. A son arrivée à Amman, le leader islamiste est hospitalisé au Centre médical Al-Husseini.

La radio israélienne évoque un marché conclu entre Israël et la Jordanie : contre les deux faux touristes canadiens-vrais agents du Mossad. Pour sa part, le ministre jordanien de l'information dément tout lien entre les deux affaires et continue de parler de deux « Canadiens ».

2 octobre : Le Premier ministre Abdul Salam Majali dément également tout marché avec Israël : « Le gouvernement ne peut accuser personne avant que l'instruction ne soit terminée ».

3 octobre : Le ministre canadien des affaires étrangères déclare qu'« Israël a participé à l'attentat contre M. Mecha'al ». Ottawa rappelle son ambassadeur en Israël pour des consultations.

4 octobre : Samir Mutawi annonce qu'Israël devrait prochainement libérer des prisonniers palestiniens, sans qu'il y ait eu pour autant de marché pour obtenir leur libération : « Il y a des rumeurs selon lesquelles le prince Hassan est allé en Israël (la semaine dernière). Ce ne sont que des spéculations, une telle visite n'a pas lieu ». Le ministre de l'information infirme encore la participation du Mossad dans l'attentat : « Si le gouvernement canadien a pris une telle décision [rappeler son ambassadeur en Israël], cela le regarde. Mais en ce qui nous concerne, nous attendons les résultats de l'interrogatoire des deux suspects ».

5 octobre : Le roi Hussein accorde une interview au quotidien arabe installé à Londres Al-Hayat. Il y qualifie l'attentat contre Mecha'al d'acte « irresponsable commis par une partie qui ne veut pas la paix ». A la question : « Qu'avez-vous dit à Benjamin Netanyahu et avez-vous envisagé de rappeler votre ambassadeur à Tel Aviv ? », le roi répond : « Si nous n'avons pas reçu le médicament qui a permis de guérir M. Mecha'al, nous aurions engagé de nombreuses actions ».

6 octobre : Retour de Cheikh Yassine à Gaza. Libération de prisonniers palestiniens et jordaniens par Israël. Retour en terre juive des deux faux touristes canadiens. Pour la première fois depuis le début de l'affaire, le gouvernement jordanien admet par la voix de son ministre de l'Intérieur, que le Mossad est responsable de l'attentat contre Khaled Mecha'al et qu'Israël et la Jordanie ont organisé un échange.

Cheikh Yassine et Mecha'al à leur sortie du Centre médical Al-Husseini.

Le Mossad est responsable de l'attentat contre Khaled Mecha'al et qu'Israël et la Jordanie ont organisé un échange.

## Le commerce d'Irbid au bord du gouffre

Consommation des ménages en baisse, entreprises inactives dont certaines sont insolubles et commerçants en plein cauchemard. Bref, la deuxième ville de Jordanie bascule dans une récession économique. La situation actuelle conduit à s'interroger sur son avenir.

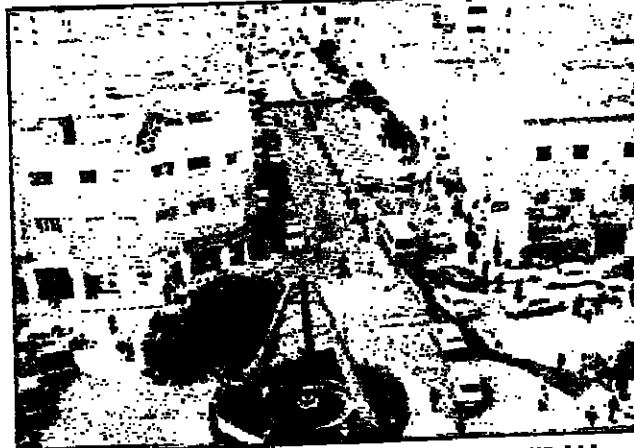
« Par rapport aux années 80, la ville connaît un véritable ralentissement de son activité économique », résume Mouhamad Shouha, directeur de la chambre de commerce d'Irbid : « Les fêtes et le retour des vacanciers représentent presque les seules périodes de réanimation du commerce. Après, cela retombe ».

Durant la précédente décennie, la présence des milliers de Jordaniens à l'étranger, notamment dans les pays du Golfe, était l'un des moteurs de la croissance économique. Suite à la guerre du Golfe en 1991, beaucoup d'entre eux sont revenus en Jordanie. Ce fut autant d'entrées d'argent frais en moins et d'une certaine manière, ces retours forcés ont participé au fléchissement de l'économie. A présent, le commerce d'Irbid dépend à 80%

des seuls salariés de la ville, selon les responsables de la Chambre de commerce. Mais leur pouvoir d'achat reste insuffisant pour relancer la machine.

Mais est-ce là tout le problème ? Incontestablement non. Malgré la fragilité économique d'Irbid, il y a encore des ténéraires qui s'engagent dans le commerce libre. Le nombre des marchands inscrits à la Chambre a ainsi triplé en cinq ans : 9000 aujourd'hui contre 3000 en 1992. Alors comment expliquer le marasme économique qui menace la ville ? En réalité les nouvelles entreprises se construisent sur des bases fragiles.

« Nous sommes toujours prêts à donner des conseils (emplacement du commerce, conseils financiers, situation du marché... NDLR), assure Mouhamad Shouha, mais personne ne se donne la peine de nous



Baisse d'activités dans les rues commerçantes d'Irbid.

concerner. Du coup, nombreux sont les boutiquiers et les gérants de petites surfaces qui se retrouvent le dos au mur à choisir entre la peste et le choléra : la faillite ou la vente à

perte. Par ailleurs, les camelots et autres marchands ambulants qui vendent à des prix très bas forment une concurrence terrible.

Face à cette situation, les di-

rigents de la Chambre de commerce comptent sur une improbable réouverture des marchés avec l'Irak, ce qui pourrait donner un coup de pouce au commerce de la ville. De leur côté, les commerçants sont de plus en plus inquiets devant la crise : « Nos gains sont en baisse et notre niveau de vie est de moins en moins assuré », confesse le marchand Mouhamad Khalaf. Il n'est pas le seul à souffrir de la récession : « Cela devient insupportable : les ventes ont fortement diminué et cette année, le bénéfice mensuel de ma boutique a chuté de moitié », confie Lama Hamada, en ravalant sa colère. Omar est aussi un boutiquier indigné qui avoue avoir vendu plusieurs fois à perte. D'après lui, « cela va mieux que de rester avec la caisse vide, surtout qu'aujourd'hui les gens hésitent à acheter ».

Les clients se considèrent plutôt comme les victimes des prix qui grimpent. « Je touche 120 JD par mois. Je suis marié et j'ai des enfants, raconte Abed, fonctionnaire, je n'arrive jamais à acheter tout ce qui est nécessaire. Comment pourrais-je alors ne pas râler contre les prix ? ». La situation économique de la ville semble si décourageante que les habitants se laissent aller à la déprime : « Si j'avais une grosse somme d'argent, je ne l'utiliserais jamais pour créer une entreprise à Irbid », témoigne Ihab Qouteifan.

La Chambre de commerce n'offre d'autre part aucun appui financier. Les marchands d'Irbid n'ont plus qu'à prendre leur mal en patience en attendant le jour de la reprise économique.

Nahed Al-Khlouf

## C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Festival du cinéma européen au Centre culturel royal

Programme du 9 au 15 octobre

9 octobre : Oeroeg (Pays-Bas), à 20h00

13 octobre : Oeroeg, à 16h30

Toto le héros (Belgique) à 20h00

14 octobre : Toto le héros, à 16h30

Fitzcarraldo (Allemagne), à 20h00

15 octobre : Fitzcarraldo, à 16h30

Me Mia Cravyi (Grèce), à 20h00

Prix : 1 JD pour les adultes, gratuit pour les enfants. Les recettes sont destinées au Centre d'éducation spéciale de l'association des jeunes handicapés, sous le patronage de la princesse Bath.

Exposition

Les œuvres des grands maîtres catalans du siècle (Picasso, Miró, Dali...) sont à Djebel Lweish, à la Galerie nationale des Arts, jusqu'au 28 octobre.

By Jeannine Stein

HOLLYWOOD—When was a 13-year-old Car made a horrible disco was harboring a copy room. She did not take "I went crazy," she are a pig? You are in These whorers?

Fast-forward... becomes Playboy's P... and subsequently P... This was no twisted tactic, just a means spotlight. That she di with two MTV gigs, controversial ad camp ing book that have bu ball, into the public's

But now it's the J... Her NBC sitcom, "Je... Improved," no... McCarthy poised to la... She plays Jenny... N.Y. grocery store ca track who discovers never met has droppe an inheritance. She le with best friend Ma... Kem to find that D... beenish B-actor Guy Hamilton, who will t throughout the season house, a time-war... (Rafer Weigel and E... videographer dudes tr big time, who live in t

The girls decide to work and launching adventures that Mc... Laverne and Shirley... But is prime tim... McCarthy

"I feel like I've gra... freshman year and m... like I'm coming into... says with a slight a... Chicago roots. "A... because it's a whole... people haven't seen... down and have a c... (of stick). Happily...

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McCarthy



# Jenny McCarthy shows her real self with 'Jenny'

By Jeannine Stein

HOLLYWOOD—When Jenny McCarthy was a 13-year-old Catholic schoolgirl, she made a horrific discovery—her boyfriend was harboring a copy of *Playboy* in his room. She did not take it well.

"I went crazy," she recalls. "I said, 'You are a pig! You are looking at these sluts! These whores!'"

Fast-forward six years: McCarthy becomes *Playboy's* Miss October 1993, and subsequently Playmate of the Year. This was no twisted ex-boyfriend revenge tactic, just a means of blasting into the spotlight. That she did, following *Playboy* with two MTV gigs, magazine covers, a controversial ad campaign and an upcoming book that have hurled her, like a spitball, into the public's collective eye.

But now it's the dawn of a New Jenny. Her NBC sitcom, "Jenny," features a new and improved, not so in-your-face McCarthy poised to take on prime time.

She plays Jenny McMillan, a Utica, N.Y., grocery store cashier on the nowhere track who discovers that the father she's never met has dropped dead, leaving her an inheritance. She heads to Los Angeles with best friend Maggie (Heather Paige Kent) to find that Daddy Dearest is has-been-ish B-actor Guy Hathaway (George Hamilton, who will appear, post-mortem, throughout the season). He's left her his house, a time-warped bachelor pad circa 1974 that comes with Max and Cooper (Rafer Weigel and Dale Godboldo), two videographer dudes trying to break into the big time, who live in the guest house.

The girls decide to stay, taking on temp work and launching a season of zany adventures that McCarthy herself calls "Lavender and Shirley for the '90s."

But is prime time ready for Jenny McCarthy?

"I feel like I've graduated, like I did my freshman year and moved on, and it feels like I'm coming into my own now," she says with a slight accent that belies her Chicago roots. "And I'm so loving it because it's a whole other side of me that people haven't seen yet, where I can sit down and have a conversation without sticking my tongue out (a signature piece of shuck). Hopefully, people will still like

me this way. I think they will, because this is the sincere side."

Despite NBC's commitment to the show (they won a fierce bidding war and have committed to 22 episodes, unusual for a new sitcom), the challenge of marketing McCarthy to a network audience may be a tough one.

First, she's been in *Playboy* three times (pictures from the original shoot appear in the September issue), which branded her a sex kitten, making some women a little leery. She tested the limits of taste with a Candie's Shoes ad campaign that showed her sitting naked on a toilet, panties around her ankles. Some magazines refused to run it, just as some TV stations won't run a new commercial for the shoe company that has a hefty-size plumber fixing Jenny's kitchen sink pipes, showing a significant portion of his backside.

Second, her demographic, by her own admission, has been "Beavis and Butt-head"-ites, mostly male teens and twentysomethings who followed her through MTV's raucous dating show "Singled Out" and the outrageous, sketch-format "Jenny McCarthy Show." She quickly gained a reputation for pushing-the-envelope antics like smelling her armpits and pretending to eat her own vomit.

Third, beyond that niche there's a lot of "Jenny who?" going on, especially among the members of the older-boomer-and-beyond set who at best have only a vague notion of this 24-year-old.

Nevertheless, Warren Littlefield, president of NBC Entertainment, is quite certain McCarthy possesses the qualities needed to succeed.

"When she was brought to my attention for the first time, I thought she was somebody who was not afraid to be funny, and not afraid to make mistakes; she had a personality that made you just root for her. There are a lot of people who haven't discovered her yet, which is why we built a show that will work for a broader audience," he says. "Not everyone may know her by name, but they've seen her on *Rolling Stone*, on the cover of *Newsweek* with a cigar, and they're saying, 'Oh, yeah, that's that girl.' I think there's this bubbling of recognition."

He admits courting a young demo-

graphic with the show: "Last time I checked," he says, "that's how we get paid. But I don't think what we're building with Jenny is an exclusive or narrow show. Jenny is about having that first break in life, and I think that's a fun adventure."

While at MTV, McCarthy signed a sitcom deal with Paramount (Paramount and MTV are both owned by Viacom). According to Littlefield, when word got out, "we aggressively pursued Paramount. I asked the most basic of all questions, 'Hey, can she act?' And our friends at Paramount said, 'We don't know.' So what I pitched was, 'Well, we do shows together, why not put her in an episode of 'Wings'?"

That brought McCarthy together with Mark Reisman and Howard Gewirtz, then producers on "Wings," who didn't know what to expect from this out-there personality.

"Mark and I were vaguely aware of 'Singled Out,'" Gewirtz adds, "but we didn't know what to think—(the show) wasn't necessarily our thing. When we met her, we were immediately struck by the fact that she wasn't an airhead blond. She did the job in terms of showing the network that this girl can act."

After that, Paramount asked Reisman and Gewirtz to come up with a sitcom premise.

McCarthy doesn't take her good fortune for granted; she knows she's been given a rare opportunity in a crushingly competitive field. Still, she adamantly maintains, she's paid her dues.

She was all of 19, a young woman who had grown up in a working-class neighborhood, when she strode into *Playboy's* Chicago headquarters in 1993 and offered herself as a potential Playmate. It was, she maintains, a last-resort, nothing-to-lose move after going broke and dropping out of nursing school, tending bar on Chicago's rough South Side, working in a Polish grocery store and suffering rejections from local modeling and commercial agencies.

"I did *Playboy* for a one-way ticket to L.A.," McCarthy says in her own defense.

"Something drew me over to those bunnies." Her issue on the newstands, she drove to L.A. with a U-Haul, settled in Brentwood and started making the rounds (she



Actress Jenny McCarthy at her home in Pacific Palisades photo by Anacleto Rapping

also had a fiancé; they eventually split but remain friends). She hooked up with manager Ray Manzella (who has also guided the careers of Vanna White and Pamela Anderson Lee), who told her about an audition for a new MTV dating show. She couldn't say "yes" fast enough. But after four seasons dealing with turbo-hormone-charged guys and girls, she was more than ready to hulk.

Her MTV comedy series last spring, "The Jenny McCarthy Show," allowed her to show more range, but the pace was brutal—22 episodes in three months.

Still, it wasn't a bad place to be for a former Playmate who hadn't even hit the quarter-century mark.

Credit Manzella for not allowing

McCarthy to languish in Bimboland. Despite her Playmate pedigree, he saw something beyond the big hair and curves: "I really liked her personality. It jumped off the page. And she has an incredible sense of comedic timing."

Manzella explains that his career-building strategy involves "thinking long-term, not short-term. It's the talent that really is the one remarkable thing here, and a good manager will not screw that up. Less is more."

McCarthy sits in the beige-and-cream-toned bedroom of a Pacific Palisades home with a breathtaking, uninterrupted view of the Pacific. She happens to share it with Manzella, who became her boyfriend about three years ago.

Rumors of a Svengali-like relationship (he is 49) don't annoy her. "Anyone who questions it and then spends time with us, they go, 'Oh my God,' because it so makes sense. I need someone who is not into game-playing and is very mature. He knows what he wants and there's no bull, and that's so key for me, especially with everything that's going on in my life."

She rises from the chair and walks into the kitchen, where Ray is fixing something to eat. McCarthy looks through sliding glass doors over the vast expanse of water.

"Looks like it's going to be a beautiful sunset, huh?"

LA Times-Washington Post-News Service

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Edited by Zeid Nasser

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Will the Internet replace your TV?

## The age of the 'Web potatoes' is upon us

By Jabra Ghneim

SINCE THE dawn of the TV age, the term 'couch potato' characterized people who spend most of their leisure time sitting in front of a TV set, browsing through its channels.

In the Internet age the term 'Web potato' characterizes people who spend most of their leisure time browsing the Web. A new technology promises to make the 'Web potato' a household phenomenon.

One of the major trends in the computer industry, for the past 18 months, has been the so called Set-top boxes or WebTVs. The idea behind set-top boxes is to give television viewers a cheap way to access the Internet, view e-mail, and browse sites through their TV set. This solution costs, at the current prices, less than \$200. It is specially attractive for those who want to access the Net but do not necessarily require the functionality of a PC.

To achieve their purpose, these devices come equipped with a remote control device in addition to a keyboard.

They are compliant with POP3 and SMTP protocols to allow users to send and receive e-mail. Since they don't have a hard disk all the e-mail is saved on the server, but you can't print your work "yet".

Hewlett-Packard will soon offer a printing solution sometime before the end of the year.

Set-top boxes come equipped with their own web browsers. They also have full multimedia support (frames, JavaScript, Shockwave, Real Audio, etc.). Since set-top boxes are meant for the whole

advertisers and other interested parties to show more content and productions that look closer to what you would expect from a TV. When this technology comes into wide use it will offer advertisers the ability to offer interactive advertising.

Interactive advertising is more than a passive experience where a user swallows everything shown to him. If a user likes what he/she sees, this user, can click on the advertiser's URL and go directly to his site, which will enable the user to get all the information needed on a certain product or service.

If the user likes the information available, the product can be ordered directly. This would open up a whole new era, where firms can directly measure the efficiency of their advertising.

Set-top boxes still need to resolve the problem of resolution to become more attractive to consumers. A company called 'Princeton Graphics Systems' has a product called 'Aradia Home Monitor' which solves the problem by porting television's low resolution 4 MHz video stream to a high resolution 27 or 31-inch convergent monitor. Big industrial names such as Philips and Sony are already in the game. Microsoft finds the idea so interesting that it bought a company called



WebTV: So 'interactive' it will reach out and grab you

family, they come with site access control programs pre-installed. Readers shouldn't confuse a set-top box with a network PC. Regular PCs and Net PCs give users a better resolution than a regular TV screen does. Add to that the fact that Net PCs give the users the ability to download files and plug-ins. Putting that aside, the main advantage of a set-top box is its cheaper price, which makes it highly accessible to users on limited budgets. In addition, the larger viewing area of a TV screen allows

## CNS creates alliances & agreements: Primus offers users much more

COMPUTER NETWORKING Services (CNS), the company that owns and operates one of Jordan's leading bulletin board services, Primus, is witnessing much activity and developments.

As part of its aim to deliver more facilities to Primus subscribers, CNS has created alliances and agreements with a number of Jordanian organizations and companies.

First, CNS has finalized a deal with National Express, the issuers of a top credit card, allowing users to subscribe to National Express services on-line, receiving 50 percent off the initiation fee and providing the option to be billed for credit card use on-line.

Also, as part of the aim to create a large market-place inside Primus, CNS has reached an agreement with Kentucky Fried Chicken

(KFC) by which users can make orders on-line! So, next time you feel like having some chicken, log into Primus, place an order and wait for the door



bell to ring!

Fort Grand Hotel is also cooperating with CNS, by going on-line and providing membership at its hot night-spot, Lullaby, through Primus.

For shoppers, Fun Directory will soon allow users to purchase their favourite CD titles

on-line through Primus. Also, Primus subscribers get a 10 percent discount off products sold by Fun Directory.

To create more interactivity between users and the authorities, the General Intelligence Department (GID) will go on-line and full information on the Jordanian constitution, peace treaty and more will be available. Also, CNS announces that its Jordan Directory including Hospitals, Embassies, Hotels and more is done.

CNS has recently moved to its new offices in Al Madaenah Al Mounawarah Street, in West Amman. The move aims to provide customers with better services due to the high capacity of lines the area offers.

In fact, CNS now offers Primus customers more than 100 phone lines. ■

## News update

### Cairo Telecom '97

● A regional telecommunications and computing show is to be held in Cairo from 4 to 7 December, 1997.

Cairo Telecom '97 is the second international trade fair for information technology, telecommunications, satellite and broadcasting. It covers the Middle East and North Africa. Telecom '97 is officially supported by a number of authorities in Egypt including the Ministry of Transport and Communications, ARENTO and the Prime Minister himself. The official sponsor is the Emirates Telecommunications Corp. (Etisalat).

WebTV for \$429 million last month. Even though we don't have set-top boxes in Jordan yet, I think it is a very attractive idea in a market where the cost of getting information is still high.

It is also very appealing in a low income market like Jordan where low budget users want to have access to the basic features of the Internet (e-mail, newsgroups, and simple browsing). The idea is also attractive for use in schools where TV and Internet technologies could be merged together, to give students better educational content in a digital audio visual form. The WebTV market promises

to be a very lucrative one for a multitude of sectors. It gives all media producers a richer way to transmit and convey ideas to their viewers.

In the Middle East, where most TV stations are government-run, the main issue will be the role of government in controlling the content broadcast through this new medium. Governments are starting to understand how hard it is to control the Internet. Thus, Arab governments will face a bit of a dilemma with the appearance of Arab 'web potatoes'. ■

Arabia, Egypt and other regional markets.

Also, Mr Emery Berkin has been appointed as general manager of Microsoft Middle East & Turkey. He will be responsible for Microsoft activities in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt and Turkey.

Mr Ahmed Chami, the previous general manager of Microsoft Middle East, will return to Morocco to act as the manager of the North West African market.

### Novell 'Connect to the Net'

● To encourage users to move to IntranetWare, Novell has introduced a program called 'Connect to the Net'. The idea is to give users the best out of their network. IntranetWare will improve network administration, lower costs and it should put a network on the safe side of the Internet.

The program provides a specific solution for Internet/Intranet needs. Upon buying IntranetWare from Novell, users get free email, a special web site design offer and much more. For more information, Novell 'Connect to the Net' package is available for only a limited period of time. For more information, contact Novell Middle East at telephone + 971 4 316444 or fax + 971 4 319248.

Microsoft re-shuffles posts and regional organization

● Microsoft has announced a new organizational structure for this part of the world, by which it is divided into five markets: Greece, Middle East & Turkey, North West Africa, South East Africa, Microsoft will continue to do business through its offices in Saudi

Arabia, Egypt and other regional markets.

## INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

### The lack of a vision for 'partnership'

RELATIONS BETWEEN computer companies and their customers in Jordan obviously lack the 'partnership' concept. When a company or corporation selects a certain information technology provider, an important partnership is created by which the supplier's skills and efficiency become a determining factor in the companies success and competitive edge.

For example, banks cannot handle much 'computer downtime' so it is very important that a quick-response supplier is contracted to solve computer-related problems quickly. In order to minimize losses which may run into thousands, not tens of thousands, of dinars.

That is why, the relation between a computer supplier and a customer, especially major customers, has to be cemented and should continue as long as the supplier delivers the levels of service expected. In a way, both companies grow together.

What seems to be happening in Jordan is that customers are far too price sensitive. This is to be expected in times when there is low economic activity in the country, however, most major customers are shifting from one computer supplier to another based on savings that are negligible. If these customers were to examine the bigger picture, they would see all the hidden costs involved in the shift because it will take a while for the new supplier to get to grips with the previous installation. Time, of course, costs money. Also, most new suppliers come in to 'overhaul' the computer system and switch it to work according to their information technology techniques. That also costs money!

Anyway, it is only normal for Jordanian organizations to change their computer supplier, if not satisfied with the service received; but it has to be remembered here that creating relatively marginal savings is not a good enough reason. It's simply not a sound information management policy. ■

### A word of credit to the free zones

A NUMBER of Jordanian computer companies are involved in the process of re-exporting certain imported computer hardware and equipment, either due to their position as regional dealers of particular brands or simply because there are neighboring markets that do not have direct access to products from their sources. One of the most prominent regional PC dealers based in Jordan spoke to me on the 'encouraging levels' of service his company receives at the Aqaba and Zarka free zones.

Apparently, goods can arrive in the free zones and depart for their destination abroad or in neighboring countries within the same day. This is of great importance to regional dealers based in Jordan who need to be able to satisfy the needs of other markets quickly by securing fast delivery.

Jordanian computer and information technology companies are amongst the most experienced in the region, specifically in Levant markets (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories), so it would be a normal step forward for some of our companies to be appointed as regional dealers covering the Middle East out of Amman. For this to work, a number of governmental authorities have to provide the efficiency, required and levels of service expected. The efficiency of our free zones provide an important incentive for companies to use Jordan as a base for their business in the region. When goods coming to the Middle East land in Jordan first, before re-export, it is beneficial to our local economy in many ways. Also, the moves to develop our free zones contribute to turning Jordan into a trade hub.

Who knows, maybe, just maybe, Jordan can attract some of the attention that hubs like Dubai do, especially in the computer and information technology sectors. ■

## Top soccer stars to play in Baresi's farewell match

MILAN, Italy—Several world soccer greats—some recently retired—will play in Milan in a farewell match for former AC Milan and national team captain Franco Baresi.

Officials of the Milan team said Tuesday that Argentine star Diego Maradona, Brazilians Antonio Carlos, Romario and Zico, Germany's Mathias Sammer, Mexican striker Hugo Sanchez and Spain's Emilio Butragueno and Michel

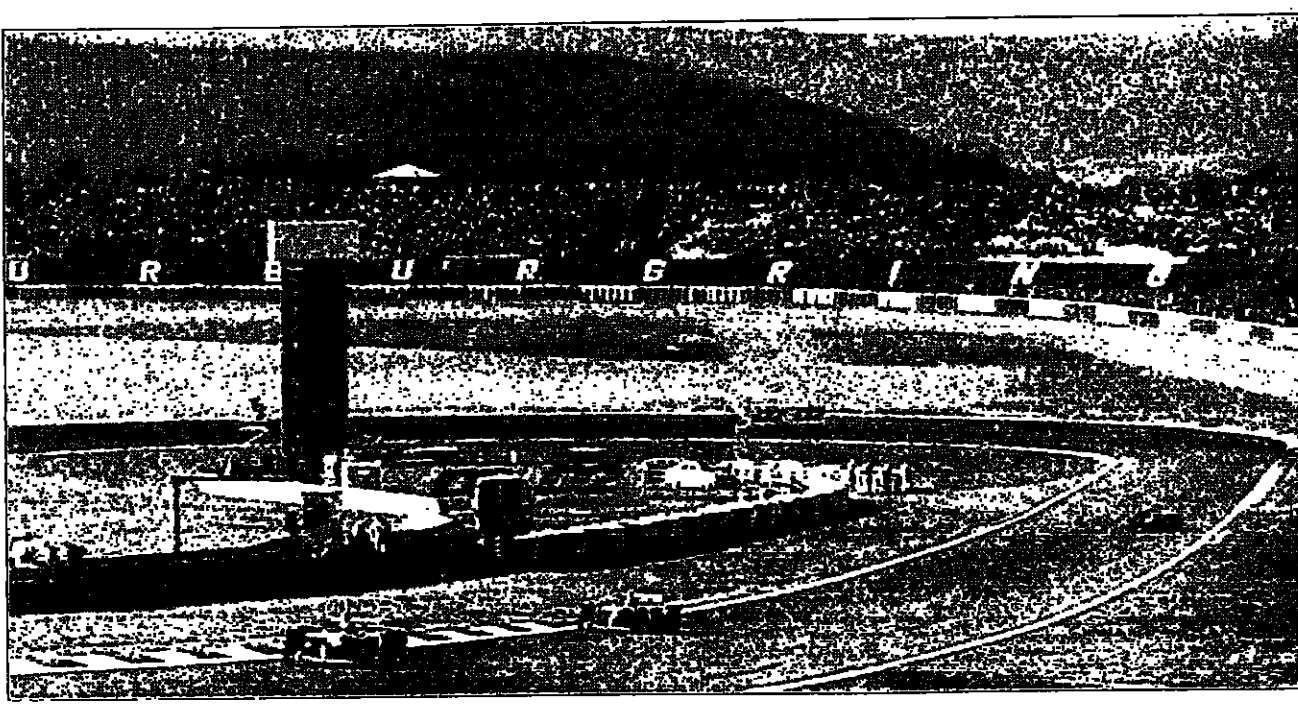
will start for the "Rest of the World" squad which will play an AC Milan team 28 October.

Among those who will join Baresi on the Milan team is the Dutch trio of Marco Van Basten, Ruud Gullit and Frank Rijkaard.

Baresi, one of the world's best defenders, retired at the end of the last season to join AC Milan management.

The game will be played to benefit UNICEF, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. ■

## Villeneuve to clinch title at Suzuka?



CANADIAN JACQUES Villeneuve returns to the Suzuka track in Japan for the second year in succession with a chance of capturing the world title. He only has to finish in front of his great rival Michael Schumacher, in a points scoring position, at the penultimate round of the Formula One World Championship at Suzuka on Sunday 12 October to clinch the 1997 World Drivers' Championship at Suzuka.

Villeneuve, driving the Rothmans Williams Renault, has won the last two grands prix at the Al-Ring and the Nurburgring to open up a nine point advantage over Schumacher. Even if they end up on equal points following the last round of the championship at Jerez in Spain on 26 October, Villeneuve will clinch the title because he will have won more grands prix than Schumacher this season.

"I think Suzuka is a great track and I love driving there," explained Villeneuve, after his triumph in Germany. "I've just got to finish one point in front of Michael to clinch the title. We go into the race full of confidence because we have pulled back 19 world championship points on Michael in the last two races. Our plan will be to

qualify well and make sure I finish in front of Michael."

Villeneuve has plenty of experience at racing at Suzuka and in Japan. In 1992 he competed in the Japanese Formula Three championship. He finished second in the championship, winning three races. His Williams team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen has finished third in the last four grands prix. He also has experience of Japanese racing after competing in the 1993 Japanese Formula 3000 Championship.

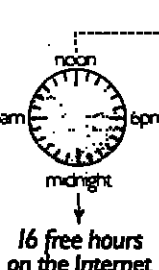
Formula One grand prix racing started in Japan in 1976 at the Fuji circuit. Eleven years later Suzuka staged its first grand prix race which was won by Gerhard Berger driving the Ferrari. The Japanese Grand Prix has often been the final or penultimate race of the season and consequently the world title has often been decided at the demanding 5.844km (3.64 miles) circuit. Last year was a prime example when Damon Hill clinched the world title from his Rothmans Williams Renault team-mate Villeneuve. Hill won the race, his second grand prix success at Suzuka, while Villeneuve retired when he lost a wheel on the 36th lap of the 52-lap race.



Jacques

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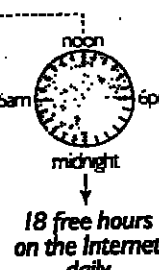


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